THE COMMONWEAL

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THE LOGIC OF LOOKING ABOUT

OPPORTUNITY for argument never ceases, even for those who stay out of politics. The voyage of the President-elect to Latin America has naturally attracted considerable attention to that part of the world, and it is only natural that conversation based on topics of interest there should increase. One example is an article contributed to the January Current History by J. Lloyd Mecham and dealing with Hispanic "clerical domination." The author is a professor of history, and with much of the material he advances we find ourselves in complete agreement. That there has been a tendency to separate Church from state cannot be denied. One may even say that such separation will actually advance the work of religion, since the Papal Secretary of State has himself acted on this principle in several instances. Times change greatly and human relations with them.

What Professor Mecham fails to supply are the explanations. Quoting with apparent approval Bancroft's remark that the purpose of Farias in Mexico was to "save democratic principles and institutions," he seems (like his authority) to pay no attention to what these actually were. The history of the conflict between civil and ecclesiastical authority in Latin America has seldom been an affair of economics or social reform. It has remained largely a conflict between ideas. Masonry, as developed in these countries, sponsored a philosophy which took for its goal the destruction of religion, as called for by the revolutionary European philosophers and sometimes justified, at least superficially, by evils which in some measure always accompany the virtue of the Church. But that Masonry has ever sponsored anything like what we should term "democratic principle" is a fallacy which all the evidence confutes. Who is the genuine democrat and social reformer—Garcia Moreno or General Obregon? The fact that the Church has turned for support to the conservatives so often is to be explained very simply by the circumstance that these conservatives have money and influence—equal in some measure to the power of the liberals—and that these ultimately control the activity of the native populations. In many cases the tide has actually been turned by an influx of foreign capital.

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This last point becomes particularly important when we hear Professor Mecham saying that, since at least 75 percent of the Mexican people are Catholics, one would have expected them "to have forcibly opposed the religious laws long ago." Good heavens! As late as a year ago liberals were trembling in their boots lest Mexican Catholics should debase themselves by rebelling against authority. Are these now to be accused of impiety because they failed to inaugurate a revolutionary campaign? The naïveté of this point of view appears to best advantage, however, when one reviews what would be the military possibilities of such a campaign. Can there be anybody who does not yet realize that an embargo on arms has been established by the United States government, the direct effect of which is to safeguard the Mexican ruling group? And how can it have escaped attention that money, always the stomach of a modern fighting force, is actually fed to Mexico in a manner which has been prescribed by Washington?

To a world which justifies the asking of these questions, a little booklet entitled Why the Reds Rule Mexico ought to prove very valuable. We confess to not entertaining any great admiration for the title, but the contents—which comprise the articles contributed to the Outlook by Marcelo Villegas—deserve more than a word of praise. These constitute a commentary on Latin-American affairs of the sort which American readers, for one reason or another, have been willing to ignore, and they marshal facts which our friends are invited to examine with as much care as they can give.

WEEK BY WEEK

SENATE discussion of the Kellogg treaty may eventually grow rather tedious, but much of it has been interesting and salutary. The misfortune which attends all such plans for rendering nationalism more amenable to the demands of civilization is that they must be announced with a whole brass band of superlatives. There is nothing "stupendous" in the Pact of Paris, though Mr. Borah was moved to utter a declaration to that effect. It is a simple device for harnessing the force of public opinion to the international job. Similarly, the tendency of critics and reservationists is to look for all manner of monstrous villains when they should really be searching for technical defects that might impair efficiency. To say that the Kellogg idea will make the United States subservient to the League or, in some manner too subtle to be grasped, will undermine the Monroe Doctrine, is simply to confess that one has given little thought to the subject. Perhaps the root difficulty in all these cases is lack of acquaintance with public opinion, its possibilities and weaknesses. There are some excellent statistical treatises on it, but we have yet to see it formulated clearly and succinctly for the understanding and edification of all. While the opportunities latent in the wise use of democratic public opinion are not appreciated, it is hard to see how there can be much enthusiasm for the Kellogg idea—or much vigorous opposition to it either.

The Senate Debates

FOR a few minutes during the discussion which preceded signing of the general treaties of inter-American arbitration and conciliation, Mr. Charles Evans Hughes found himself in somewhat the same embarrassment which once made wretched the distinguished gentleman against whom he campaigned for the highest office in the land. A leading spirit in this new covenant among the nations, it was an article of his own authorship which was most severely attacked. Perhaps the delegates led by Dr. Carlos Escallon of Colombia, who objected to Article III which provides that conciliation proceedings may be instituted before an inquiry is made, were being sympathetic in the manner of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, who is willing to advise young writers but whose favorite advice has been "murder your darlings." Mr. Hughes, being no fledgling but a wise and doughty old bird, would have none of such advice, however sympathetically prompted. He was "happy to say" that the United States would sign both treaties "without any reservations." These words were enough to encourage six of the other nineteen compacting nations to take the same stand, among them being Panama and Cuba.

Without Reservations

THE letter of John C. Box, Texas Representative, to Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York is presumptuous, to say the least. His election as Democratic whip of the House does not carry with it the disposition of the future of the Democratic party. Yet, swollen with his new honor, he leaps into the limelight with an arraignment of the predominant forces in Democratic ranks which nominated ex-Governor Smith at Houston, and serves notice on them that, for the sake of the party, they must abandon control. Failure to do so, he declares, will involve cataclysmic results. That these dire predictions and veiled threats should be made to Mr. Roosevelt, who was so far to the front in the "calamitous political miscarriage" that he nominated Smith, is at once astonishing and amusing. If dissension in the party, with ultimate dissolution lurking as a possibility, is the desire of Mr. Box, he goes well on the road to accomplish his purpose. Reorganization is vitally needed but the South is in no position that would justify its dictation of party policy. Nor is the Texan's statement that "the Democratic party consists of its people and leaders, united and inspired by a party-wide consciousness and high valuation of its mission of service to the country" left uncontradicted by his truculent attitude. The minority party must face

The Democratic Whip Cracks

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many unpleasant truths and difficult problems, but its salvation will never be effected by makeshift compromise, nor by mere blind submission to traditional association and attachment.

ALL sorts of governmental matters come up for discussion nowadays, ranging from the future of mankind to the well-being of Manistee. One point, however, has been scored in the West, and we believe it may prove to be of primary importance to thousands who seldom take the trouble to vote or deliver orations of moment to the race. Outdoor Life, the Denver publication for sportsmen, has recently waged a campaign to safeguard the waddling wild duck. The editors want nothing more or less than reduction of the number of savory fowl which a huntsman may shoot in one day. Singular, you will admit, is this reticence on the part of the men behind the trigger; but they are wisely thinking of a future when there may be nothing to shoot at in the marshes, and when Bryant's illustrious lyric may have a tragic ring indeed. The chief of the United States Bureau of Biological Survey—who is, as it were, the grand exalted game warden—could normally be expected to take up such conservation suggestions with great earnestness. But, though the reduction was advocated by his predecessor, Mr. Redington has refused to move. Instead he has, actuated probably by a desire to let no one else tell him what to do, ordered a waterfowl census. Outdoor Life describes this as follows: "It appears that once a month the man designated to count spends a day (or part of a day) walking (or riding) around a certain area (or an uncertain area) counting (or estimating) the ducks that are there (or at least those he sees). The bulletin adds gravely that the observer is urged to 'avoid counting the same ones twice.'" For our part, we believe that the ducks are for Outdoor Life. And, very naturally, we ourselves are for the ducks.

How Not to Count Ducks

IN 1933 Chicago is to have a World's Fair. One requirement for the success of such a show is that the finances of the city which offers it must be in a healthy condition. Another is that the city have no evil name, so that attendance may be swelled by visitors from distant places. How many from this country could be attracted to a World's Fair in Calcutta? How many to an exposition in Port Said? Yet neither of these two cities has an uglier repute with us than Chicago has abroad. It is in consideration of this that Chicago business men are planning the formation of a citizen's committee which will "draft from great corporations their best experts and place them in strategic points in the city, sanitary and county governments." In other words, an "over-government" of experts whose salaries, while in public service, will be paid by the corporations from which they have been borrowed. The plan is not a new one; it has been tried in Baltimore, where it resulted in the wiping out of a deficit, a 20 percent reduction in taxes and the restoration of Baltimore's fair name. It should succeed in Chicago, if tried, unless Mayor Thompson decides that he does not want it to succeed. It will be interesting to see how he would greet such a program; regarding the idea in its present status, all that can be reported is that he has preserved an ominous silence.

Housecleaning in Chicago

NEITHER time nor money will be wasted, according to Governor Theodore G. Bilbo of Mississippi, in investigation of the hundreds who participated in the atrocious killing of Charley Shepherd, escaped convict. It was thoroughly appropriate that time and money should be expended in his apprehension, but there Governor Bilbo's interest ceased. It ceased at a time when the most casual and remote observers realized that the occasion was primed for a lynching. The militia, which had been mustered for the capture, should equally have been mustered to prevent one of the most horrible orgies written in southern history. No atom of justice, no matter how guilty the man nor how revolting his crime, can be read into the vindictive torture and frenzied cruelty that marked the mob at Shelby. Mississippi's record of lynchings, high in other years, comprised over one-third of the entire number in the United States during 1928. Fortunately the American people are diametrically opposed to the laissez-faire policy as enunciated by the Mississippi governor. His failure to prevent the crime, and his determination to do nothing to discover those involved, make him a sharer in the common guilt. Mississippi's electorate, if it wishes to escape the stigma of further lynchings, ought to elect officials who will jealously guard the authorized administration of justice and actively oppose anything tending to take that power out of their hands.

Mississippi's Disgrace

SINCE desperate times warrant drastic measures, the dissolution of the Skuptchina, the abolition of the parliamentary system in Jugoslavia and King Alexander's assumption of absolutism are justifiable steps. Indeed events in the Balkan kingdom, from the moment of Italy's suggestion of the Nettuno treaty, which permits Italians to acquire land along the Jugoslavian coast, have steadily marched toward such a goal. Last summer, at the time of the assassinations in the Belgrade National Assembly, The Commonweal took occasion to say that there was a strong possibility that the king would be forced sooner or later to establish a military dictatorship. In taking this step at last, Alexander is in no wise seeking personal power. To the contrary, he has steadily fought off the inevitable until it became the sole remedy. Dr.

Alexander and the Balkans

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Koroshetz's administration, while characterized by no marked ability, could never have succeeded no matter how capable, since he was pledged by the very nature of the kingdom's formation to oppose the embattled Croats. It was obviously impossible to rule by party when a powerful faction was demanding autonomy. A national dictatorship, which abrogates even the constitution itself, eliminates party government. But in Jugoslavia, unlike the present régimes in Spain and Italy, the dictatorship, since it does not arise from any merely political dominance, is therefore entirely independent of party.

THE meagre reports from the kingdom, coming as they do under strict censorship, declare that the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes who go to make up the most diverse nation in the world, are entirely satisfied with the king's coup d'état. This remains to be seen. Croatia, which has always believed that its lands were being exploited by the government under Serb control, may well be content that the portfolios of finance, trade and agriculture—the three departments covering its greatest interests in national affairs—are placed in its hands. Nevertheless Alexander's move is an absolute negation of the demand for autonomy which has been persistently made for the past six months, and toward which the establishment of a capital and rump parliamentary body at Zagreb was a dangerous expedient. On the whole, however, we believe the Croats will be satisfied that unity, with fair representation of their party, can be attained, and that the king should be given the opportunity of a trial. The situation is pregnant with danger for Europe. Partition of Jugoslavia would be the signal for Italy, Austria, Hungary, Greece and other Balkan nations to rush to further territorial and economic aggrandizement. Consolidation of his kingdom becomes both nationally and internationally a task of the first importance and one which the entire world will hope Alexander can happily and speedily accomplish.

THE pastoral letter of Cardinal Hayes, embodying the annual appeal to the Archdiocese of New York for home and foreign missions rightly stressed the pressing necessity of missionary work in the United States. Even with the glaring example of the recent political campaign, many Catholics of New York have little comprehension of the difficulties other members of the Church encounter in many sections of the country. Poverty and intolerance unite to penalize their faith. There is a great and constant need—none have realized it more than the Calvert Associates and The Commonweal—for the clear and intelligent presentation of the Catholic position everywhere in this country. The Cardinal declared that notable sections of America, more perhaps than any other civilized country, sadly want enlightenment on Catholic teaching and practice. The strengthening of our home missions becomes extremely important. The fewness of places of worship and schools in many districts militates against conversion and seriously hampers that instruction in the Faith which has always been among the basic endeavors of the Church. Surely the work assigned to our home missions is deserving of the immediate and wide support of all the faithful.

For the Home Harvest

M. CONSTANTIN-WEYER, to whom the Prix Goncourt has brought money and fame, can be described as an unusually picturesque figure. Wounded many times during the great war, he turned to writing as to a kind of alleviation from pain and sleeplessness. The subject-matter became, to a large extent, the Canada he had known as a young man. His best-known book, Un Homme Se Penche sur Son Passé, contains at least one episode which calls to mind the most stirring pages of Parkman. A young trapper is returning to civilization through a terrible blizzard. His companion has died and the quite unsentimental man is fulfilling a promise to carry the body home. He pauses to rest awhile against a snow bank and is suddenly approached by a stranger. The silence between them is broken by an inquiry regarding the strange bundle, and an explanation. Then the stranger, who is a missionary in the northland, bares his head, makes the sign of the cross and recites the De Profundis. The episode, told with great tact and colorfulness, suggests the most vigorous scenes in Châteaubriand, and has been frequently referred to by critics as an example of the beauty that can be derived from introducing the religious sentiment into the world of the wilderness. For this and other reasons, the work of M. Constantin-Weyer should meet with not a few friends in this country.

Canadian Romance

PARIS has been in the throes of Shakespeare controversy. Anybody who has attended a meeting of one among a half-dozen associations that might be named will realize what this means. But for the Gallic mind, which loves ideas that rise in proper order from a substratum of facts, the quicksand of Elizabethan study must be particularly distressing. The root of the trouble was the decision of M. Gaston Baty, a leading manager of art drama, to use the text of the First Quarto for a production of Hamlet. Surprisingly enough, the play turned out to be swift and engrossing, devoid as it was of the languors of the "whole" Hamlet. This success led M. Baty to venture the assertion that in this version (which he termed the first) the entire mind of Shakespeare is revealed at one jet, spontaneous and minus the additions which diverse interpolators supplied. Unfortunately this theory is undermined by the circumstance that, following the lead of Professor Lawrence, most authorities have decided that it is the Sec-

Hamlet Himself Again

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ond Quarto which represents the first Shakespearean draft, and that the first is not Shakespearean at all.

THE argument runs something like this: the Folio Hamlet, usually considered the authentic text, is full of interpolations and excrescences, despite the unctuous explanations which the editors prefixed to the book. Of the two Quartos, the First was obviously written for the country theatres, the Second for the city. But Shakespeare's company was not then traveling in the country. He had, indeed, to write with Richard Burbage in mind for the leading rôle, so that the Second Quarto actually does give us a fat Hamlet, scant of breath. It would seem, therefore, that the First Quarto was actually written by Kyd or some other playwright, who borrowed as much as he could from the earlier Shakespearean text, which itself had been based on generous loans. Grant all this (and apparently it is a summary of existing scholarship) and M. Baty appears to have accomplished a marvelous thing. He has proved that a play written by a minor Elizabethan is not only good, moving drama, but also that it "reveals Shakespeare" with singular felicity. At any rate, one sees that romantic approaches to the Bard of Avon, formulated during a century of very subjective criticism and poetic effort, are gradually being revised with a thoroughness which will not diminish until the objectivity of the Elizabethan theatre and the corporate nature of its human background have alike been effectively revealed.

THE production week of five days adopted by the Ford Motor Company, to the applause of American labor, demonstrated through 1928 nothing more than that it could be responsible for a falling off in output of approximately one hundred thousand cars. Naturally it is impossible to keep up normal production when operating a factory only five days in the week, unless equipment as well as personnel is increased by one-fifth, which seems not only an expensive but a cumbersome way of arriving at the desired goal. And that goal, of course, is employment for a greater number, and the preservation of health and morale among those employed. By the Ford Company's new plan, which is to preserve the five-day week for labor but to operate the machines on six days and hire 30,000 additional workmen, the difficulty is avoided and the purpose achieved. Outside of the humanitarian virtues here asserted, which are of the greatest importance but unmeasurable by mathematics, the plan will be of immediate advantage to Detroit, since the unemployed of that city are being given preference in filling the new positions. The Ford Company has done its share toward maintaining prosperity in the locale of its chief interest, and has set up, as well, a model for employers everywhere who have something more than a word-of-mouth zeal for the welfare of the working man.

A Full Week for Machines

TO STUDY from a Catholic point of view the literary and scientific problems which interest their countrymen is part of the aim of the Catholic Association of Chinese Students, recently founded at Pekin. Publication of a weekly supplement to the daily newspaper Ichepao, which will eventually lead to the publication of an independent magazine, is one of the means by which it is hoped to create a Catholic intellectual movement in China. Perhaps "create" is not the word, for something of the kind has been under way for several years, although this is the first attempt to give it effective form. That the spirit proper to the undertaking is behind the society must be the significance of its motto, which the Fides correspondent translates as "All that is Catholic is ours." If these young Chinese can truly make their own all the Church's tradition of culture, if it can ever mean to them something more than an alien growth to be reverenced without understanding, their society will prove more than a name under which to claim fraternity. And this, unfortunately, is what most associations of the sort degenerate into.

Young China and the Church

ELINOR WYLIE

THE life of Elinor Wylie was in several respects a very sensitive index to the world in which she lived. This, with its great industrial combinations and its headlong rushes toward a new democracy which never came to be anything, had encouraged the critic to grow eloquent over the "materials" which creative art might use. You went to hardly a single highbrow lecture, as late as five years ago, but that you listened to complaints that this "raw, enormous" land was going to waste in so far as novelists and poets were concerned. Indeed the critic succeeded in a measure. His propaganda called forth a realism which, though it usually gave the impression of having been made to order a little hastily, was self-confident and "expressive."

When Elinor Wylie turned from poetry to prose, narrative, after the fashion of almost all important modern writers, she stood for a radically different desire. Although such books as Jennifer Lorn and Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard preserve some contact with real existence, they have something else entirely for their major theme. It is unnecessary to expatiate here on this aery symbolism, which might be compared to conjuring visions of bright crimson dreams from smoldering ashes, or to getting out of an inexpressive phrase the meaning it might have contained. All this will be clear to anyone who knows how to read books and actually does so. More worthy of note is the circumstance that here was a symbolism and a thirst for beauty. If in her books she did little more than surround herself with bric-à-brac (as more earnest critics occasionally feel), it was at least because that environment proved her an aristocrat. She

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could arrange the bibelots on the shelves. She could make scintillant conversation about a little more than nothing. And so her delicate sophistication had a chance, when served in media not too opaque, to win the homage of those who longed for similar agility and finesse of mind.

That Elinor Wylie was a poet nobody will gainsay. It is even possible to compare her with Villiers de l'Isle Adam, though this similitude is also a measuring. For there was lacking in this American woman a great deal of the moral and philosophic security which enabled the merest badinage of the French gentleman to arrive at metaphysical significance. She was not empty, but the universe she looked at was fundamentally empty. One is reminded too frequently of Chesterfield to keep the illusion that one is listening to the Countess of Pembroke. You and I may well wonder, however, if that is not quite true of everything—or nearly everything—that may be termed American aristocracy. It is not that we are fine, delicate, reticent that matters. We may paint vases with a clear conscience if we simply loathe becoming disciples of Courbet. But that all our maps of the cosmic circle are broken arcs, that our graceful heads have no pillars against which to lean—these are disconcerting matters.

America has the greatest opportunity in recent history to develop a genuine aristocracy. To some extent it also has the desire, and certainly we should be the last to deplore such a social exploit for promoting the art of living. But there is the danger that nothing may result but a Trianon and a few shepherdesses. Therefore the joy and fantasy, the mockery and pathos, of Elinor Wylie are encouraging examples rather than goals. One so beautiful will long remain a figure to mourn sincerely, nevertheless. At sight of her all heads must have been glad they turned.

THERE IS A MR. BARNES

THE analysis of the relations between religion and science presented by Professor Harry Elmer Barnes to the American Association for the Advancement of Science is hardly worth much attention. The professor is not a scientist. One is hardly sure that he is even a historian, though this happens to be his official title. But the gist of his remarks has a representative importance, and may be phrased as follows: that there is a God is doubtful, but there surely is a Mr. Barnes. The certainties at which science arrives seem to be really a little diminutive! It is the old phenomenon of a vanishing sense of the absolute induced by confused impressions of the relative. The man himself changes, grows, bustles about with ever so many dark and fascinating motions, ultimately finding himself unable to believe that his consciousness is not a faithful snapshot of all reality. Simple religious ideas, left uncultivated by experience, do not seem half so important as bright and big new philosophic syntheses. It all reminds one of a woman who, as a result of a raise in salary, moves from a tiny flat into a large apartment only to discover that her pictures and curtains have not stretched meanwhile.

Not everybody who is agnostically inclined will rush to the conclusion that there is no sin, but Professor Barnes did rush and so one may profitably call attention to facts well within his own province of sociological history. Suicide statistics are very useful barometric devices for finding the moral weather of society. Many factors, of course, induce people to take their lives, and some are obviously pathological. Insanity is its own law and excuse. But who can deny that the will—or let us say the "voluntary complex"—plays its part? Zarathustra himself proclaims: "I preach free death to you, which does not go slinking like the death ye know, but comes because I will." This the ancient sages knew and admired. The Hebraic-Christian tradition alone has stemmed the tide of self-murder by calling it a sin. And as the Harry Elmer Barneses increase, the imitators of Socrates and the disciples of Nietzsche multiply also.

Recent studies in the figures for Germany make the matter abundantly clear. First, note what has happened to the Jews. A people which lived according to the Bible and the Talmud hardly knew what suicide was. But among Hebrews of the typically modern type, self-destruction has increased at a rate which Jewish authorities consider utterly alarming. In Prussia during 1925, suicides among the Jews were four times as numerous as suicides among Catholics, the reckoning being made on a percentage basis. Social and economic conditions cannot be held responsible. In poverty-stricken Galician ghettos, where the old faith is maintained, hardly a single self-murder is encountered; but where the Jew is free, rich and emancipated, the coroner is busy as can be.

Even more impressive are the German statistics concerning Catholic and Protestant populations. Though the suicide totals in both cases have increased since the war (which means, of course, that purely pathological cases have grown more numerous) the figures for the years 1891 to 1923 indicate that the Catholic suicide rate is slightly less than half as large as the Protestant rate. This throughout the country. Further analysis reveals the circumstance that in 193 districts having an almost exclusively Catholic population, the rate was under 1, while in 336 districts where the population was less than 10 percent Catholic the rate was 2.48. Finally Protestant students have advanced the theory that, in so far as their groups are concerned, there is a direct ratio between decline in the number of those taking the Last Supper and increase in the number of suicides—in other words, that deep and earnest awareness of sin is the deciding factor.

But if there be no sin? We wish Professor Barnes and his ilk all the luck in the world, but we hope they are obliged some time to explain to an emancipated

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soul just what science has to offer in the way of retarding self-murder. And if it cannot halt even this wave, which seems to most of us so abnormal and which must appeal to an out-and-out joy-in-lifer as simply ridiculous, what can it do to stop any other species of indulgence? But, unless we are wholly wrong and have been incorrectly brought up, sociology cannot be more than a chronicle if it is powerless to check indulgence. Who knows? There may be some sense in the old rhymes after all.

NOR GOOD NOR TRUE

SCATTERED, uncoördinated and unsuccessful attacks on the whole jury system, by which twelve good men and true perform one of the most necessary functions of government, have recurred during many decades, but today the advocates of methods more adapted to modern life have found an opening wedge. This lies in vesting a judge with the sole responsibility of adjudication. So eminent a jurist as Charles Evans Hughes believes that here is the beginning of satisfactory reform. He declared several weeks ago that "the hope for progress in the administration of justice lies not in juries, but in conscientious, able, industrious judges in control of the business of their courts. Give the judge all the power he has and more. . . . Get rid of jury trials as much as possible. It is very difficult to get a proper jury. Often it is impossible to get a satisfactory one."

Yet Mr. Hughes's suggestion is weakest, unfortunately, in just that fundamentally important objection to juries—the human element. Granted that it is easier to select one "conscientious, able, industrious judge" than twelve proper jurors, the risks of selection are increased many fold. Judges themselves are the first to recognize this and are often anxious to escape, particularly in criminal cases, the weighty responsibilities inherent in their decisions. The whole machinery of their appointment or election is impregnated with potential fallacy of appraisal and selection.

What Mr. Hughes has to say about jurors, what is the criticism of lawyers, judges and students of the problem today, is undeniably true. Our juries do not answer the ancient qualifications. They are usually neither good nor true. This reflects no criticism on the probity or intentions of most jurors. There is an alarming percentage who are not good simply because they have not the intellectual or mental equipment to gauge the problems with which they are presented. That they are not true must follow as an inescapable corollary. One need not look far to discover why this is more characteristic of jurors today than ever before. The bringing into court of practically every phase of human endeavor and conduct is decidedly a modern development. The enormous increase of matters requiring legal untangling has swelled the rank of talesmen without any appreciable effort having been made to improve their qualifications to serve. On the contrary, the whole trend of modern life, particularly in America, slopes toward disqualification of larger and larger sections of our citizenry. Aversion to capital punishment, sentimentality toward criminals induced by a long period of yellow journalism, the impetus given to prejudiced and impassioned opinion, inherent distaste for the task itself, and even hostility to the very law which creates the condition on which they deliberate, add countless thousands to those who should never be allowed to sit on a jury.

To the fact that there are many whose inability to be good or true is never discovered by judge, lawyers nor the jurors themselves, is attributable the large percentage of flagrant miscarriages of justice. How can lawyers or judges unearth the insuperable objection to a juror when they can have no knowledge of the man save what they draw from him by question and answer? Personal acquaintance with individuals, which is acquired by those practising in smaller communities, aids in selecting the most favorable jury rather than the ideal twelve men. Lawyers have repeatedly learned that a case has been decided against them because some one member on the jury, in the position of being effectually influential with his fellows, has gone to his deliberations with prejudices which are concerned with persons and have nothing whatever to do with the evidence on which the case should be decided. The corruption of jurors has prevented final disposition of many cases by the courts in which these jurors have assumed legal office. Placed in the hands of one obstinate or tainted juror is the power to negative the action of the other eleven. From this consideration comes the natural argument that a majority, or a three-quarters majority, should be empowered to return a verdict. This modification meets the objection perfectly, but it in nowise raises the standard of ability for jurist action.

Mr. Edgar Allan Poe, in a recent essay, called attention to the procedure which has been evolved in his native state, Maryland. There very few civil cases are tried before a jury. In criminal cases, the constitutional right of an accused person to be tried by a jury of twelve men arriving at an unanimous verdict is preserved, but he is free to waive this right and dispense with jury trial. Fully three-fourths of the criminal cases in the state, Mr. Poe points out, are tried without jury. Judicial practice, however, has led the presiding judge to invite two of his associates to sit with him. Notably few inequitable decisions have been reached. Trusting less the infallibility of one man and dividing responsibility among several is, after all, the meat of the jury idea. Any further attempt to clothe it in other methods must necessarily be entirely in the nature of an experiment. Meanwhile, guaranteeing every citizen the full benefits given him by the constitution, the Maryland idea might well be enlarged to provide for a more direct decision by a few officers trained in jurisprudence and law than can ever be attained by the traditional twelve.

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ROOSEVELT TEN YEARS AFTER

By CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON

TO THOSE who knew him Theodore Roosevelt was always the same. He was always kindly, friendly, full of interest in other people, and—though this will jar on the popular conception of him—even-tempered. You never knew when Woodrow Wilson's temper, for instance, would take fire, but if you knew Roosevelt at all you knew you could not "make him mad." He got angry, of course, but when he did it was generally with somebody who did not know him; and invariably, it may be said, it was with somebody who either did something contrary to his code of ethics or ignorantly attributed sinister conduct to him.

Contrary, too, to an impression that still prevails, he was an unusually patient man; and he was exceptionally, and some of his friends thought unreasonably, willing to hear argument designed to prove that he was wrong. Most of his mistakes were made from giving in to such arguments; though he was protected from too much yielding by his uncanny instinct for being right in the first place, and by sticking to that instinct until the others saw their mistake.

He spent his life among reporters, a hard tribe to convince. It is a rather odd fact that most of them came to him prejudiced against him. I have never known of any who remained so prejudiced. He did not convert them by blarney; it is rather hard to convert a hardened reporter by that, and hardened reporters were the kind usually assigned to live with him, travel with him or see him daily. How did he convert them? Primarily by the discovery they quickly made that he always told them the truth; and since the necessity of discounting what a public man tells a reporter, and of knowing how much to discount and where, is the most fatiguing part of such a reporter's duty, it is quite impossible to estimate the revolutionary effect of this invariable discovery on the minds of men on this assignment.

He never flattered them or even complimented them, and for that matter I never heard of his flattering anybody. However, there is no implication here that the hundreds of reporters who, from first to last, made their daily lives with Roosevelt were won over to him merely by the fact that his candor and honesty made their work easier. There was something else. It was the constant presence of a large, generous, joyous nature; and, believe it or not in these Freudian and scientific days, such a nature is dead sure to awaken its response.

Of course the men whose lot was cast with him—and this means many others besides reporters—did not like him less because he was such a scrapper. But a scrapper is never popular as such; rather is he unpopular. Roosevelt, as a fighter, was popular because of the way he bore himself in a fight. He knew exactly where the point of the jaw was; but he also knew where the belt was, and was as careful to keep his hands off the latter as to plant them crashingly on the former.

He had his vanities, and one of them was his pride in this way in which he never failed to win over the most prejudiced by simply playing fair, so long as the prejudiced one was with him for long enough to be given a chance to discover that trait of his. I do not mean that he laid his conquests to the trait; in fact I do not believe he ever analyzed it at all, or thought much about it. But it gave him joy, down to the end of his days.

In his campaign for the governorship, in 1898, a celebrated reporter was assigned to him for perhaps a day or two. He had no chance to meet Roosevelt except maybe for a hasty moment, but he did have a chance to pose thereafter as an authority on the Colonel; and it happened that he had taken the assignment with a bitter prejudice against him. Of course that day did not mitigate it; and for nearly twenty years, during which the reporter grew into late middle age, he was one of the main "authorities" for Roosevelt's humbug, hypocrisy, posings and other lamentable qualities.

One day, a year or two before Roosevelt died, and when I had ceased for some years to be a reporter, I went to Sagamore Hill to consult the Colonel about something, as I often did. We finished the topic in about two hours, and as I was rising to go he asked me:

"Have you met my Cabinet this year?" (He meant the squad of reporters regularly detailed to Oyster Bay to watch him.) "If you haven't, go in the next room and meet them and I'll join you in a minute. My Cabinet is an unusually fine bunch this year. Do you remember Blank?" (he named the reporter who had been blackguarding him for twenty years on the strength of that supposed acquaintance in 1898). "He's been out here for two months, and"—with a delighted smile—"he's the best friend I've got. He's the head of my Cabinet."

The reason why he so bewildered people, especially experienced politicians, with the unaccountable, zigzag brilliancy of his moves, was that he always pursued a straight course, which was the last thing they were expecting. He never puzzled them so much as in 1916, when he devoted himself to a herculean campaign to wake the American people up to the impending war, and to the necessity of being prepared for it. This was from pure love of country, and of course it never occurred to the politicians, searching for his mysterious motive, that it could be that. They finally

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concluded, sagaciously, that he was trying subterraneously to get the Republican nomination for President, and bent all their endeavors toward heading him off from it.

I asked him, one day at Sagamore Hill, if by any miracle he might get that nomination. I was not then a reporter. "Impossible," he said. "There are already 985 delegates going to that convention, and the anti-Roosevelt crowd have got 700 of them, according to my estimate. What I'm trying to do is to scare them into making an American nomination, or at least not an un-American one, and into adopting an American platform—or at worst, not an un-American one."

So he kept on letting them scare themselves with the idea that he was trying to get the nomination, and, as they credited him with miraculous possibilities in the way of political deviltry, they kept right on being scared until Hughes, the most American of all the possible candidates, had been nominated. The rest were a sorry lot.

"Besides," added Roosevelt, "if I ever did have any chance of the nomination, which I didn't, I destroyed it by my campaign for preparedness and resistance to German aggression. I may scare them into taking a half-way American attitude on those questions, for fear I'll bolt again if they don't, but they certainly wouldn't nominate anybody who has been pioneering on those matters; their only idea is to please both pro-Germans and pro-Allies and nominate somebody who won't be offensive to either."

At this time the favorite assertion among the Roosevelt-haters was that he was pro-English; if he wasn't, why did he propose to call Germany to account for killing American citizens and not call England to account for holding up our mails? Were not both interfering with the freedom of the seas? Roosevelt did not bother in public about this form of attack, but in private he discussed it with me.

"If I were President," he said with a grin, "I'd call England to account, all right. But, before I took up the matter of her interfering with the mails, I'd make Germany stop murdering our citizens. Then I'd say to England: 'I've made Germany comply with international law. Now you comply with it too.' But," continued the Colonel, much more emphatically, "I wouldn't say it by embarking on an endless series of notes with England, as Wilson does with Germany."

"How would you say it, Colonel?" I asked.

"I'd send our mail to Europe on warships," said the Colonel, "and if there were not warships enough, I'd send it on merchant vessels convoyed by warships."

Wilson's two years of note-writing with Germany kept the Colonel in a constant boil. One day at luncheon at Sagamore Hill the conversation had become too placid for Alice Longworth, and signifying to me with a look that she was going to start something, she remarked innocently:

"I see that Wilson has sent another note to Germany."

The placid Colonel emerged from his lair at the head of the table, roaring. "Did you happen to notice what its serial number was?" he inquired. "I have rather lost track lately, but I am almost sure it is number 2,921."

On another occasion, when his mischievous daughter was not present to goad him, he spoke his mind more seriously to me. "Wilson is a dangerous man," he said. "He is a man of brains, and he debauches men of brains. Henry Ford and William J. Bryan only debauch fools."

Usually he did not speak of Bryan bitterly, only with a good-humored scorn which was provoked by his opinion of that individual's intelligence. Once, for instance, when his plans were unsettled, I asked him whether he meant to deliver any lectures, and, without intending any comparison, added that the new Secretary of State, William J. Bryan, was going to do it. He pinned me to the wall with that ironical stare which, as I knew, he used for the purpose of annihilating people who said foolish things, and after watching the effect for half a minute, he opened his lips and spoke.

"I am," he said, with great care and precision, "a different breed of cattle from Bryan."

During his Presidency there was much horrified talk about his preference for low companions. In fact, I think it filled more newspaper and magazine columns than anything else about him. As he was known to be a man of culture and education, besides being a distinguished author, it was impossible to charge, as was cheerfully done in Governor Smith's case, that he did not know any better. So it was universally assumed that his joy in the company of wolf-killers, guides, cowboys, reporters, prize-fighters, was a pose assumed for the sake of making votes. Once, at the height of the hot campaign of 1912, he agonized the Bull Moose National Committee by compelling it to stop his train at a pueblo town in New Mexico so that he could make a speech to its population—all of them Indians without a vote in the place. He seemed to be having the time of his life.

"I have to talk to millionaires," he said to me in the White House once, "but I wish I didn't. They bore me. You'd suppose the master of a great industry would be full of interesting things to say. But they're not. They know their own businesses, but the moment they stop talking shop they haven't an idea. Outside of money-making they're dumb. I don't mean that as a unanimous condemnation," and he named three millionaires who had ideas outside their business, in his opinion, "but it applies to nearly all of them."

This was no defense of his fondness for the society of people who did have something to tell him, such as Jack Abernathy, the wolf-killer, Bill Sewall the guide, and—not that he was in their class—John L. Sullivan. He never did defend himself against the high tide of talk about his hypocrisy in pretending to like such men

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so as to get votes. But it enlightens the subject somewhat.

However, the idea of his democracy was very much overdone. It implied, in the minds of many who did not know him, a lack of dignity. Even those who knew him best had to treat him with respect. In the newspapers and by the crowds he was called "Teddy," but his own relatives never ventured further than "Theodore," and few of them did that. "Cousin Theodore," or something of that kind, was the usual limit.

Yet I never knew anybody whom you were more at ease with. He was the Boon Companion himself. "The life of the party" is often the man who dominates it and won't let anybody else have a chance; but Roosevelt was the "life of the party" because he, always, was having such a good time. I speak with some knowledge. I met him in 1898 and spent my last day with him in 1917—nineteen years. I knew him as a reporter, but with one exception the stories I have told are of my experiences with him after I had ceased to be a reporter; so prone was the world in his day, and so prone is it now, to believe that public men fool the reporters who know them. That unamiable superstition will never die; a famous magazine article was published not so long ago entitled The Coolidge Myth, demonstrating that the crafty devil now in the White House has fooled all the blindfolded reporters in Washington into describing him as something other than he is.

What lay back of Roosevelt the Boon Companion was his inveterate interest and delight in everything. He was always the first to see the funny side of anything that had one, and his enjoyment of it was inexhaustible. Whether he had it in public or not, in private he had a perfect gift for phrase, and what is more, could carry his meaning to incredible lengths by the inflection of his voice. That falsetto of his, which was at first ridiculed and finally accepted as an endurable peculiarity, was his way of using italics in his speech, and that will serve as an illustration of what I mean.

As an example is always more telling than a mere statement, I will give just one example of this. He was not satisfied with Hughes's nomination in 1916, and accepted it only as better than the evils that threatened in the candidates Wall Street was backing. One day, when Hughes's nomination was probable but not certain, we were talking about it at Sagamore Hill, and the Colonel had discussed it with deadly seriousness from every angle. The famous falsetto was absent; he was weighing every word. Finally he reached the question of why the reactionary Republicans and Wall Street were against Hughes.

"They would rather renominate me than take Hughes," he said, still with that weighty seriousness, "because they would know what to expect. They say, 'We would have an uncomfortable time with Roosevelt, but after all he plays the game; if we let him have his principles and policies, he would let us have the post offices.' But with Hughes, who knows? The day after he was elected he might discover that the need of the hour was the abolition"—suddenly screeching up to his highest falsetto—"of horse-racing by constitutional amendment."

ITALIAN MYSTICS

By ARRIGO LEVASTI

SAINT FRANCIS of Assisi is the true founder of Italian mysticism. This mysticism, it may be stated, is of a practical rather than of a speculative order, but none the less full of life, of poetry and of song. In general it is not the product of cloistered meditation. It is born in the open air, of the pageant of the changing seasons, of the songs of birds. Every impulse expresses itself in some hymn of joy, or manifests itself in visions that have the fervor and clarity of sunshine.

It must be said, of course, that in Saint Bonaventure, with whom metaphysics and mysticism are interchangeable terms, it is a metaphysical mysticism. But he remains an exception. In the other Italian mystics we are sensible of sudden jets of Divine love—of ecstasies where Lover and loved commune. Profound heights and depths are at times attained, but the intellect takes small part. The triumph is one of the affections. With the simplicity of a man who plunges into a cool lake, the soul is immersed in God. Or, as we read the lives and literary relics of some of these mystics, we find ourselves breathing an air almost terrifyingly rarefied, and are overpowered by their spiritual altitude. But we find in them no shadow of a need for speculation, nor any analysis of their state such, for example, as Saint Teresa so lucidly gives us. On the contrary, they are declarations, signs and actions of love. Our mystics tremble and are dissolved, they soar and cry aloud, they long to feel their contact sensibly and to enjoy unrestrainedly the joy that union with God produces. Very few are the cases in which the inherent nature of the Divinity is an object of contemplation, or in which the desire to know God implies an urge to know Him and penetrate Him in His essence. In general the union is sought through the Incarnate Word. It is the life of Christ that is the means—the desire to be one with Him, that is the goal. The Cross, the Wounds, the Body of Christ, are objects of the most poignant transports. Effusions, embraces, kisses are for the Saviour. The Father is to be attained through the Son. Union with God means penetrating the body of Christ, means feeling the warmth of the blood flow-

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ing from His wounds. This is divinization—this is perfect union! German mysticism, or the mysticism of a Saint John of the Cross, is a much more speculative affair.

With our own mystics, though, realism is master and reaches a pitch at times almost, if the word may be permitted, brutal. Alike God is to possess and to be possessed from the very roots of human thought to the ultimate atom of flesh. Nothing of our being can evade an embrace so comprehensive and so powerful. Once purified by penance and mortification, the body has every right to share the joy of the soul and to vibrate with its every emotion. At certain moments these mystics seem to be almost adepts in the joys that love procures, and we discover in their spiritual writings the profuse color of writers who make the senses their theme. But if their words have all the suavity of a caress, the spirit that informs them belongs to nothing earthly or material. However fantastic the vesture, however insinuating and caressing the vocabulary, a sublimation of love quite superhuman in its quality is driving them to utterance. We feel a divine power behind every phase. The experiences that they record are common to all Catholic mystics. It is the expression they choose, colorful rather than intellectual, that is their own.

Considered as literature, the field is a limited one. There is a repetition of imagery; the same invocations, no less enthusiastic each time, recur again and again; the very tears seem of an even crystal. Hence the monotony that many complain of who read the "affective" mystics, such as our own. We look in vain for the diversity and audacity in theory which is the hallmark of an adventurous and constructive mind. The preoccupation of the Italian mystics is to attain the Divine, as it were, in a single bound. So long as the invasion of life is sensibly experienced they care for little else. For them, to know God and to feel God through the power of love are one and the same thing. They achieve intimacy through rapture. It is possible to cull theories more or less mystical from their writings. But what stands out is the description of their spiritual experiences, sometimes strangely external. What knowledge of God we gather is gathered by implication.

In other words, they are analysts—but analysts after the fact. Even then their analysis is imperfect compared to that of the Spanish mystics. It quickly transforms itself into treatises where an unlimited enthusiasm is followed by a languor which seems the dying fall of some angelic melody. Their life seems to be nourished by sharp contrasts between light and shadow. They can pass in a moment from the deepest and darkest despondency to an exaltation that seems to be irradiated by the light of myriad suns. Each of them has his own distinctive character, but they tend to fall into two categories. Either they are gentle and suave, their phrases calm and tranquil, with a phraseology that becomes almost tedious from the intimate character of its communications, or else they have the violence of a hurricane, their words seem to issue from some interior upheaval, stinging and searing like blows from a whip. If we marvel at the delicate and impalpable terms that the former group discover to describe their spiritual adventures, we stand almost inhibited before the latter, as they launch, with a sort of divine frenzy, one incandescent phrase after another, that leaves a scar wherever it strikes.

What is the evolutionary history of these mystics? It may as well be admitted at once that any scientific record of their development is impossible. No real solidarity exists between them. They are isolated phenomena, unknown one to another, who owe little or nothing to their predecessors. Among mystical poets themselves there is a cult for such poetry as that of Jacopone da Todi. But in general our mystics are not addicted to reading. It is quite evident that they refrain from seeking their spiritual nutriment in the past. The very secretaries, confessors and disciples of these strange spirits were nearly always so far beneath them that, instead of giving them any impetus in their spiritual ascent, they hampered and restricted it. Their flights were often unknown to those nearest them.

The most important group of our mystics is undoubtedly to be found among the Franciscans of the thirteenth century, who were still animated with the burning ardor of the little poor man of Assisi. From the strictly mystical point of view, the writings of the saint have not a very great value. But he has succeeded in transmitting his own spirit, which is an inspirational one and preserves the full freshness of the wind that was astir the day he received the stigmata on La Verna. In this group, besides his companion, Brother Egidio, whose sayings embody a mystical theory based upon the seven states of contemplation, we have the three greatest mystics whom Italy has ever produced. Saint Catherine of Genoa, who may be considered a fourth, succeeded them only after the lapse of two centuries. Between these three great figures what is roughly a generation elapses. Saint Bonaventure was born in 1221; Jacopone da Todi, in 1230; Angela of Foligno, in 1249.

Saint Bonaventure created a mystical system. He attempts neither the vertiginous depths nor the superhuman heights of Jacapone. A subtle reasoner, and a lover of tradition, the absolute did not disturb him, and he preferred a moderate and ascertained life. He thrills with love, but in his treatises there is nothing disturbing or exacting. Too much emphasis seems to displease him. He keeps aloof from dark and threatening skies. His own eyes are fixed upon the blue firmament, and he takes delight in regarding the infinite. Considering the human intellect, he finds it less adapted than human love for attaining the highest truth. To philosophy and rational theology he gives a subsidiary place. God is to be reached by a continuous and loving ascension. Six stages conduct to the

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summit of all things, and each one corresponds to some faculty in our own souls. When the sixth stage is reached, everything vanishes save effusions of love and ecstasy. Christ offers Himself to be the vehicle of our ascension to God. Every species of intellectual operation, even the most automatic, ceases here. "The apex of feeling transfers itself to God and is observed in Him." A secret operation indeed, and one to be apprehended only through experience! We stand in a divine shadow, which Saint Bonaventure seems to have learned, conversely, as it were, from the pseudo-Dionysian theories of the Areopagite. A twilight replete with perilous mystery, before venturing into which we must seek help from

> grace—not doctrine; desire—not intellect; the aspiration of prayer rather than the studied lesson; the spouse—not the master; God not man; obscurity—not lucidity; not light, but the fire that inflames utterly and bears Godward whosoever seeks Him with excessive unction and ardent affection.

Jacopone da Todi is the antithesis of Saint Bonaventure. Where one is calm and serene, the other is violent and stormy. There are times when we feel in Jacopone the shock of an earthquake. With him everything is vigor and impetus. He can conceive life only in terms of the absolute. There are times when he seems a fanatic—even a madman. But reading his poetry over again, we perceive that behind all its turgid phraseology lies the power of God, and that not even Dante, with his marvelous art, has so well expressed the spiritual life. Jacopone, indeed, has no equal save Ruysbroeck, much less violent though even more profound, and intoxicated with the same divine afflatus. We may, if we like, reduce his Canzoniere to a system, and show that in them three lives are clearly designated—the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive. But even after so doing we shall still be far away from the essence of his spirit. His mysticism seeks utterance in positive shouts of love.

Blessed Angela of Foligno has left us no such itinerary of the soul toward God, nor any verses as powerful as those of Jacopone. Hers is a simpler soul. She abandons herself to the spiritual current by which she is upborne; she is enchanted with her own visions. She makes no attempt to utter profundities. Her style is rapid, without either elucidations or restrospection. Her phrases correspond to what she has seen and experienced. If Fra Arnaldo had translated her into the marvelous idiom of his century, we should possess a treasure of vernacular literature, and in all probability her influence would be more widely felt. Reading the Latin text (so happily reconstructed by Doncoeur) we perceive that the great mystic's confessor, either through ignorance or a false sense of stylism, has over-manipulated her thought. Nevertheless, her visions remain the most vivid of documents. The love which is never absent from her writings appears to her as an arrow whose slightest touch penetrates the heart. A plenitude of spiritual joy contrasts with an inexpressible languor, which little by little becomes vocal, either in invocations to death, descriptions of the embrace between the soul and God whose tenderness transcends any known by spouse or child, or the utter abandonment of oneself in the ocean of God and the Trinity, which is the culmination of the three.

Her book of visions is a graphic picture of the interior life. But Blessed Angela does more than record and depict. She strives to evolve a doctrine. She gives us a theory of prayer, treatises on the angelic orders, on the successive stages of contemplation and on union with God. It is in this union, she tells us, that the soul attains its full freedom of development. Contact with the Divine modifies it and transforms it. The transformation is threefold. First comes the blending of the personal will with the Divine. The second corresponds to the three properties of the Beloved: love, humility with benignity, and immutability. The third is a transformation reached through intimacy with God, where existence is impossible save "in illo qui est." Sublime state, where Creator and creature become one and the same thing, and in which the soul, enkindled by love, becomes more and more glorified until, to use the only possible metaphor, it dazzles the eyes that gaze upon it!

Pages which describe mystical experiences are found in the succeeding century with La Cavalca, Venturino da Bergamo, Giovanni Colombini, Giovanni delle Celle. Paola of Florence has written a description of her mystical visions. But it is Catherine of Siena who dominates our fourteenth century. The Sienese saint is a great mystic, who had visions and attained to spiritual nuptials. It is true she does not describe the union with God with the sublimity of a Jacopone da Todi or of an Angela. Saint Catherine of Genoa later will show a far greater profundity of thought. After rapidly assimilating the teachings of the Dominican Brothers, with whom she was in constant contact, she colored their teachings with fire and blood, but we fail to find a single original idea in her writings. Her Dialogue on Divine Providence is sustained throughout on a single note of enthusiasm and tension, which induces a certain monotony and diminishes its effect on the reader. Doubtless there are admirable pages.

In her writings we find, as in her famous letters, that we are conscious of an ardent soul which gives itself unreservedly for the good of others. At every instant we recognize the authentic note of heroism. But the purely mystical experiences of the Sienese saint—heavenly as they undoubtedly are—do not inspire those sovereign phrases through which we learn how the finite can become infinite. Possibly her language is too realistic, her words seem forced in some continuous fervor, over-colored. As we read we seem to have over our heads an ardent sky whose relentless fervor instils a positive desire for shade and rest. She depicts far more the condition of the soul yearning

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toward God than the action of God in the soul of the seeker.

In the next century Saint Catherine of Bologna is the outstanding figure. Hers is a mysticism of the purest and loftiest kind, where the metaphysical and the affective commingle. Using what seems to be direct inspiration from heaven, she seeks to resolve the gravest problems of existence. With a quite marvelous lucidity she treats such subjects as the nature of sin, intercession between Creator and creature, the origin of all things. She shows how spiritual life is only possible in God, and how love, like some inundation incredibly immense, invades heaven, earth and even reaches hell. The operations of God are closely observed, and we have such a marvelous record as the following:

> I see proceeding from this divine love, directed toward the soul, rays of burning light, so strong and penetrating, that they seem destined to annihilate not only the body, but even the soul, were such a thing possible. These rays have two functions. First, they purify, then they annihilate.

With complete union to God comes absolute oblivion of self, and the immensity of universal life is felt in the soul.

> Faith seems to me utterly lost—hope dead . . . I do not know where I am. Desire, search, will to know—no longer exist in me. I am plunged, I am immersed in the element of His love, as though I had sunk below the surface of the ocean and could touch, feel, see nothing save water. Thus, and no other way, am I immersed in this sweet fire of love, which dissolves the very marrow of my body and soul. Sometimes it seems to me as though my body were of dough, and as though the alienation from earthly matter with which I am overcome, left me unable to control it.

With Saint Catherine of Genoa the great succession of Italian mystics ends. Here and there, from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth, luminous and imposing figures appear. But writings of an authentically mystical cast have ceased.

As years pass the descent grows more evident. The polemical note begins to creep in. There is a positive efflorescence of manuals. Sentiment degenerates into sentimentality, subtlety replaces the scale and sweep that make for grandeur. These pious and saintly souls still slake their thirst with God. But their writings are mediocre. Henceforth the horizon contracts, and souls no longer find the energy to seek the heights and depths. The eighteenth century, too, has its mystics. Some pages of Galgani and Il Ferrini breathe spiritual repose, and in Rosmini we find the record of a vigorous and active life lived in union with Christ. But nearly always the words and phrases which express the encounter with God lack the old energy and fervor. Since the day of Saint Catherine of Genoa many worshipers have lost themselves in prayer, many pilgrims ascended the foothills of pious contemplation, many ecstatics regarded the heavens with mute yearning. But the impetus which tears the soul from earth to carry it in one bound to the limitless region of the unutterable seems to be no longer a part of human experience.

HOMES IN ISRAEL

By JOSEPH BONSIRVEN

ONE of the most illuminating aspects of Judaism, and not the least attractive, is its characteristic family life. Perhaps nowhere outside of our Catholic monasteries are the days so filled with religious thoughts, the lowliest duties so charged with holy symbolism. Even when modernism has weakened the hold of the law, childhood memories of the liturgy of the home exercise a subconscious influence on the lost sheep of Israel. It is important, therefore, in any synthetic study of Judaism to weigh this moral element in the development of an entire and peculiar race psychology.*

The unborn Jewish child is already wrapped in the atmosphere of religion. In his mother's room the murmurs of the Torah are to be heard; on the wall hangs the Twentieth Psalm, and sometimes also the cabalistic inscription: "Adam and Eve. Lilith (demon of the night) keep out!" During the week which precedes the circumcision, a continuous procession of friends and rabbis come to pray and read passages of the Scriptures and the Talmud that the evil spirits may be put to flight. And the circumcision is followed by a sacred banquet.

In the non-Levitical families if the child is a boy and the first-born of his mother, thirty days after his birth he must be redeemed according to the prescription of Exodus xiii: "Thou shalt consecrate to the Lord every first-born. . . . And thou shalt redeem him." Accordingly, the father sends for a member of the family of Aaron, and places before him the child and a cup containing five shekels, the price of the ransom. The priest asks: "Which do you prefer: to give me your eldest son, the first-born of his mother, or to redeem him for five selas according to the law?" The father answers: "I prefer to redeem him; here is the purchase price."

Rabbi Juda ben Tema has written with conciseness on the subject of the child's training:

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* *This article is a translation of one of the chapters of Father Bonsirven's book, Sur les Ruines du Temple, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.*

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> At the age of five, reading of the Torah; at ten, the Mishna; at thirteen, the Commandments; at fifteen, the Talmud; at eighteen, the baldachin [marriage].

Such, in brief, is the program of Jewish education. Still, the parents do not wait till their child is five before beginning his religious formation; as soon as he can lisp they teach him prayers and passages of the law, they train him to regulate all his gestures, all his vegetative functions according to the traditional prescriptions. All the day long his plastic mind is steeped in a religious atmosphere. The blessing before meals which makes the table a family altar, the pious readings which he hears so often, the solemn spectacle of the domestic rites—all these things cannot fail to give him a religious orientation.

Soon it is time for the young Israelite to begin his schooling. The Jews have always set great store by instruction, profane as well as sacred; parents are under a grave obligation of providing for the education of their children, and the community is obliged to aid them by supporting their religious schools. Indeed, in the primitive conception, religion was to be the unique subject on the school program; to shut out the corrupting influence of hostile civilization only the Bible and the Talmud were to be taught. So it was that for centuries, and even in our own day, in certain "yeshivot" of central Europe, modern literature and all the physical sciences were proscribed as abominations.

But in the course of time changing circumstances have shattered this dangerous exclusivism, and today Jewish education is universal in its scope. Of course the importance of Hebrew, the language of the sacred books and the liturgy is stressed, but in practice it often plays a bad second to Yiddish, the harsh Hebrew-Germanic dialect which is developing, especially in America, a literature of its own.

A graded series of schools formerly provided for the religious instruction of youthful Israel, but except in a few of the more populous ghettos, such confessional schools are replaced today by study circles in the after-school hours. The first stage, the heder (room) comprises a small group of children from six to twelve years of age; they learn to read Hebrew, exercise themselves in translation of the Torah and imbibe the first principles of moral and dogmatic teaching. The next class, called the Talmud-torah (study of the law) introduces them to the legislation of the Mishna. Finally, the candidates for the rabbinical career follow the courses of Bet-hammidrash (house of studies) which differs in various countries, the Occident favoring the modern seminary, while the Orient clings to the picturesque mediaeval "yeshiva" where the young dialecticians are trained in the labyrinthine subtleties of the Talmud.

It is a memorable day when the child makes his first acquaintance with the law, when according to the old idea, he scales the height of Sinai. Arrayed in his Sabbath best he is led to the synagogue to hear an excerpt from the Torah. This over, he is confided to his teacher whose duty it is to make him taste the sweetness of the sacred literature. For this purpose the new pupil is set the task of transcribing the alphabet and certain texts on a slate, which is forthwith covered with honey that the scribbler in licking it may verify the words of Ezechiel: "And the law was sweet as honey in my mouth."

Later on, when the child has attained the age of thirteen years and one day, his religious majority is recognized: he becomes "bar-miswah" (obliged by the Commandments); in the synagogue he can be counted as part of the Minian. At present, in most of the communities which have accepted some of the innovations of the Reformation, this majority is celebrated by a feast of religious initiation, often called "confirmation," or even "communion," terms which betray a Christian influence and make the ceremony unacceptable to the more rigorous zealots for the law. The custom, notwithstanding, continues to spread, and large crowds of relatives and friends flock to the temple to witness the exploits of their youthful doctors in Israel. It is indeed an exploit. The privileged boys, dressed like our Catholic first communicants, mount the platform and take their place at the reading-desk to chant the Scripture passage which they have laboriously studied and practised for months. The chant over, they recite a prayer and make their profession of faith. This last is the only part of the program shared by the little girls.

Five years later the youth of eighteen must think of marriage. The command of the Creator was absolute and universal, "increase and multiply." In the Jewish conception there is no room for celibacy; and Rabbi Eliezer goes so far as to declare that not to have offspring is as sinful as to shed innocent blood. Accordingly, matrimony occupies an important place in the Mosaic legislation and takes up five treatises in the Mishna. Of course many of the legal prescriptions are practically obsolete, but in general the religious character of marriage is jealously guarded and a merely civil contract is not considered true matrimony.

The marriage rites have a long history behind them. The contracting parties are counseled to prepare by fasting and prayer for the important step. At the appointed day they take their places in the synagogue under the "kouppah," a canopy made from a shawl and a veil of the Ark of the Covenant, and symbolizing the sanctity of marriage. The presiding rabbi begins by blessing a cup of wine which he offers to the bride and bridegroom to drink. The latter then contracts the union by putting the nuptial ring on the second finger of the bride's right hand and saying, "With this ring you are consecrated to me according to the law of Moses and of Israel." The contract formula is then read followed by six benedictions, and, finally, the ceremony closes as it began, with a cup of wine for the bride and groom. But this time after the last

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drops have been shaken out, the groom takes the cup and crushes it underfoot (formerly the custom was to hurl it against the north wall) as a reminder that death and suffering will inevitably come to temper wedded bliss.

"All things have their season," says Ecclesiastes, "there is a time to be born and a time to die." And as religious observances surround the Jewish cradle, they are likewise lavished on the chamber of death. The sick man is never left to himself. Visitors are constantly offering him aid and consolation, exhorting him to confidence in God, reciting with him psalms and other prayers. To arm himself against the attacks of the enemy, the sufferer repeats his profession of faith, especially the formula, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one only Lord." Sometimes also, to symbolize his conversion and to foil the tempter, he changes his name for a more salutary title, e. g., Victor or Raphael, and if he is cured, he will keep the new name.

When death comes, the nearest relatives are obliged to put on mourning, rending their garments and murmuring the prayer of resignation: "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord! Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, King of creation, true Judge. . . ." The burial confraternities will come to prepare the body, console the mourners and bring them their meals; for they must remain seated on the ground, wholly given up to their grief for eight days. After the funeral ceremonies—the recitation of the prayer of resignation called Justification of the Judgment, and interment in the "field of the living"—the oldest son, or in his place his wife, will go to the synagogue every day for eleven months to recite the Qaddish. It is commonly believed that this prayer can save the departed soul from eternal punishment. The belief is evidenced in this touching legend:

> A father died and his soul was summoned before the Judgment Seat. The accusing angel made the charge, "Lord, this man was a confirmed egoist, cruel and wicked; he violated all the prescriptions of the law. He has forfeited every claim to mercy." The angel for the defense was dumbfounded. What argument could he make for his unhappy client? Suddenly a crystalline voice coming from afar broke the heavy silence: "Exalted and sanctified be the great name of God Who created the world!" "What is that?" the angels asked in astonishment. "That," cried the counsel for the defense, now full of confidence in his cause, "is the voice of a poor child who blessed the hand which has made him an orphan. It is the voice of this man's son. He is praying for his father and proclaiming before his community that he whom he mourns has at least taught him to love Thee, O Lord, and to bow down before Thy sovereign will." . . . And so, thanks to the Quaddish of his son, the father was admitted to eternal felicity.

THE SCIENTISTS CONVENE

By JAMES J. WALSH

THE annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held in New York during the Christmas holidays was by far the most successful meeting the Association has ever had. When the first convention of this character ever held in New York assembled in 1900, there were altogether only about twelve hundred members and less than half of them attended the meeting. Now there are some eighteen thousand members and more than one-third of them were present. Indeed it is said that nearly eight thousand were at one or more of the meetings. Some idea of the immensity of the proceedings can be gathered from the official announcement that "altogether 2,200 papers were read by 1,900 people."

The keynote of the meeting was frank and open confession of how little is known and how much remains to be known with regard to the scientific subjects that are most interesting at the present moment. Scientists of distinction in all departments were quite willing to admit that there are ever so many things which they would like to know but which are, as yet, a mystery, and that in not a few cases the mystery shows very little tendency toward solution. We are undoubtedly making progress by our additions to knowledge, but every addition brings with it the recognition of a great many more things that we do not know, yet would like very much to know. We are gaining in knowledge but we are multiplying our ignorance. That idea was expressed in various ways by a number of the most prominent scientists at the meeting. All recognized that science is passing through a transition period in which ultimate conclusions are quite out of the question. The broad generalizations that were so popular at the beginning of the twentieth century now give place to the recognition of the fact that only the next step can be taken, and that scientists must wait for further development before they proceed to the making of additional announcements.

The general addresses, five in number, which were given at the auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History and for which the speakers were selected because they were the leaders in their specialty, represent the mind of the Association. These men were all ready to acknowledge how little we know. This was perhaps best illustrated in the conclusion of Professor Compton's address on What Is Light? He received the Nobel Prize last year for his successful investigations in this subject and is recognized as its

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authority all over the world. The large auditorium of the American Museum of Natural History was packed both on floor and gallery, with a great many standing. Professor Compton could tell them only how little he knew. Newton centuries ago announced a corpuscular theory of light—that is, the theory that light consists of minute particles shot out from the lighted object. This was replaced by the undulatory theory of light which suggests that light consists of waves propagated in the ether. Some twenty years ago Einstein declared that we must go back to the corpuscular theory. There are certain observations, however, which seem to require the wave theory of light. The answer to the question, what is light? then, may be that it is minute particles but it may be waves. It may quite possibly be both waves and corpuscles.

Professor Wheeler of Harvard, the well-known entomologist, discussed New Tendencies in Modern Biologic Theory. He began with some quotations from critics who emphasize the "extreme confusion" which exists in biological theory. It has been suggested that we are at a crisis but scientific criticism might say that we are rather in a mess. There is nothing satisfactory in any of the present-day theories, and the only light on the subject now is through a "compositio oppositorum," a reconcilement of opposites. Professor Wheeler closed by a warning against permitting extraneous influences to modify biological teaching, and emphasized the fact that we need ever so much more information. He ended with a quotation from Saint Augustine—"A thing is understood according as it is loved"—which he suggested might be translated freely: "The love of science for its own sake will give us knowledge that will have the deeper meaning which we crave."

In the chemical address on The Story of the Elements, Professor Arthur A. Noyes, the retiring president of the Association, brought out the fact that the atom which, from its Greek derivation, should signify the ultimate particle of matter, the indivisible or uncuttable, now proves to be a type of solar system with a central nucleus sunlike in character made of hydrogen nucleii and electrons, with other electrons like planets circulating round it. When the molecule began to be represented as something like the dome of a cathedral with atoms like motes of dust moving around in it, the conception seemed very wonderful. Now instead of the dome of a cathedral they are comparing not the molecule but the atom to the solar system and the electrons within it to planets. The almost infinitely great in astronomy is now paralleled by the almost infinitely little in the atom. This is what radiation, as studied by the sister science, physics, has revealed. Above all, Professor Noyes dwelt on that romantic element, helium, originally discovered through the spectrum in the sun and thought to be confined to the sun. Hence the name helium, from the Greek, meaning sun substance. Now it is found so commonly on the earth that it is used to inflate dirigibles. It proves to be the chemical key to many problems in the composition of elements, and may help in the solution of the transmutation of metals which the mediaeval people believed in so thoroughly and the scientists of our day are looking to so confidently, though a hundred years ago it was supposed to be one of these mediaeval absurdities that modern chemistry had completely disposed of.

The most popular of the general addresses was that on The Galaxy of Galaxies, by Dr. Harlow Shapley, Payne professor of astronomy in Harvard University and director of the Harvard Observatory. He took the large audience that had assembled in spite of the rain on an excursion through the other galaxies beyond our milky way, a mental trip of perhaps a thousand million of light years. He confessed how "desperately ignorant" we are of many of these astronomical problems, but he brought out very successfully the arguments that exist for the question whether or not the groups of galaxies are not themselves just single units in a system of still higher order. It is not that there are other universes, but that there is a larger universe of which the other universes and our own are component parts, all under the reign of law and all bound by gravitation, and perhaps other energies, to our universe.

With all this of humble confession by the recognized scientists of the country, of how little they know and how much they know there is that they would like to know, it was very amusing to have the New York Times appear on Sunday morning with the announcement on the first page, first column, that man has developed to such a mastery of the universe that a new definition of God in the light of astrophysical studies has now become necessary. There were such other expressions as "the new cosmic prospective has banished the old idea of sin and new rules of conduct based on scientific foundation must be worked out." The words thus played up by the reporter for the sake of their sensational effect on Sunday morning all came, not from a professor of astrophysics or any of the physical sciences, but the reader of a paper whose name is scarcely known in scientific circles and who is just a professor of sociology in one of the minor colleges, a New England college for women. The paper was read in Section N of the Association, that of the medical sciences, and was supposed to be on the history of science.

In introducing the last of the speakers at the general sessions, Professor Osborn, president of the Association for the Advancement of Science, depreciated the fact that a theological paper should have been presented before the Association and should have attracted so much attention. The expressions were sensational, especially, as we have said, for Sunday morning's paper, so the reporter and the make-up editor played them up. It was just a question of the Times falling for a publicity seeker whose knowledge of the

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scientific subjects he referred to is about the same as that displayed by H. G. Wells in the early pages of the Outline of History, which has been ridiculed so much by genuine scientists. Such expressions get front page space in just the same way as a murder or sex crime is given that position. As a representative of the proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, it is a joke—no, it is newspaper science.

The true attitude of the Association toward the question of science and religion is indicated by the election of Robert Andrews Millikan as its next president. He did not hesitate to say that the worst stupidity of science is "the assumption of unpossessed knowledge, the dogmatic assertiveness, sometimes negative, sometimes positive, about matters concerning which we have no knowledge." He added, "Physics has recently learned its lesson and it has at the present moment something to teach to both philosophy and religion, namely, the lesson of not taking itself too seriously, not imagining that the human mind yet understands or has made more than the barest beginning toward understanding the universe."

Woods-Smell

You feel that everything is well
The moment that you come to smell

Tall ferns downtrodden, with a hint
Of bears about, a breath of mint,

Sweet fern rubbed well by finger and thumb,
Sunny wild roses, balsam gum,

Fumes from a toadstool's fat umbrella,
The guardian scent of citronella,

The tang of salt winds from far surf,
Filtered all day through trees and turf,

Fir tips, the reek of heavy loam
Pawed by a fox from his new home;

Slow incense of red cedar logs
Trailing their smoke on orchid bogs;

A dapper skung across the clearing—
Provided that he is not nearing;

Rich rankness from that profiteer—
The mushroom—and the atmosphere,

Sweet as a honeysuckle gate,
That warm wild strawberries create.

But when you nose the forest through
And pass its odors in review,

The early fragrance to compare
With massed pine needles in the glare,

Lurks in that reconnoitering sniff
Of forests when the final whiff

Of steam and city things has gone,
Leaving the sharp, primeval dawn.

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER.

IN DEFENSE OF DULNESS

By AMANDA BENJAMIN HALL

A FRIEND, upon returning from England, once told me of a conversation, essentially British, which she had the good fortune to overhear in a tea shop. A woman of the most ample proportions, and with obviously no nonsense about her, entered the place alone and, ensconcing herself at a table, ordered tea to be served for two. She was joined presently by her husband, a thinner, taller, more pliant individual with a subdued and charming sense of humor.

"And what have you ordered for me, m'dear?" was his kindling question directly he was seated.

His wife gave him an uncompromising, I-know-what-is-best-for-you look, and answered, with heavy emphasis on the last word.

"I have ordered you a bun!"

"A bun!" echoed the poor man disconsolately. "Dear me, how dull!"

It seems that in England, even as in our own United States, dulness is the dreaded condition and crime. We are all for cherry tarts rather than buns for tea, and we care not what form of mental indigestion may ensue. As regards our literary fare, we prefer that authors should have something to say, but whether they have anything to say or not, we insist, paradoxically, that they shall say it amusingly. I, personally, beg to be known as an exception to the rule. I like my writers to be dull! I have respect for and faith in one too full of his subject to have figured out a fancy or demure way of presenting it. Furthermore I honestly believe I am as apt to find entertainment where none is advertised as the other way round. As I am subject to depression in the company of persons who are nimble and assured, good parlor performers and aggressive talkers, so I am ill at ease with scribes gleefully conscious of their modus operandi.

It seems that there has descended upon the oasis of our civilization a very locust plague of clever writers. It seems that everything healthy and green in the way of material has been ravaged by them—not one good old platitudinous palm but has been eaten to the last leaf. And in glancing about one observes that the moral landscape presents a rather denuded appearance.

Since satire is nearly the entire stock-in-trade of cleverness, there is always the search for something hitherto unmolested to attack. In Oscar Wilde's day the field for exploit was infinite. All sorts of misconceptions flourished; fallacies in rich foliage offered themselves to this playful locust who eagerly devoured them. Even George Bernard Shaw found the fare ample and pleasing when he started to ravage the remaining superstitions, to the delighted scandalization of the world. Alas, for the lean emulators of these two! Little is left for them. With appetites unassuaged, they move on to those little trees of personal and private belief whose verdure shows tender and tempting. These so-called clever ones, these nibbling nuisances, like the poor, are always with us.

Wearied by the pseudo-brilliance of their performance, the inevitable tour de force, many readers there are who must yearn toward some prosy old favorite, a fellow refreshingly modest and self-abnegating, even unfashionably well-bred, who is not at all sure of his jokes and rarely essays one. His voice is low-pitched, his dress a trifle outmoded. But he may be relied upon to refrain from scintillating, and trusted not to change your top-hat into a guinea pig, or murder your mother behind your back. He is a dull bun but he contains nourishment.

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

Tomorrow

THERE is plenty of amusement and no little material for thought in the play which Hull Gould and Saxon Kling have concocted with the able assistance of a producer named John Ashley. The only thing which Tomorrow lacks is a plot or story of sufficiently sustained interest to balance the ingenuity of its various scenes and the amusing episodes.

For you must know that Tomorrow takes place in a reasonably near future at a time when mechanical inventions are just a few stages in advance of present promises. Airplanes have become helicopters—that is, machines with propellers to sustain them in the air instead of wings. The human diet has been reduced to concentrated calories. Tobacco has become a bootleg commodity. Television has reached a perfection which enables one to see as well as talk to a person over the telephone. Doors can be opened and closed by a species of radio control contained in a wrist watch. In other words, this play attempts to provide in the theatre something of that semi-reality concerning the future which Jules Verne created in his great books. The main difference is that Jules Verne generally provided a stirring narrative, whereas Tomorrow relies so entirely on the novelty of its mechanical effects that it fails to come through as drama. There is some effort to create melodrama in the struggle of various people to control an important new invention. There is also a subplot from which you can draw the moral that nature herself is a better source of happiness than the mechanics invented by man. But these elements are not combined with any particular force, and the comedy grows listless when its novelty begins to wear off.

Among the more interesting scenic developments is the use of a sliding stage, so that when people pass from one room into another you can follow them without the interruption of a curtain. This has been done before with revolving platforms, but I have never seen the idea operate as smoothly or effectively. Livingston Platt designed the settings and deserves a great deal of credit for breaking away from conventional proportions without merely indulging in the bizarre. One sees here a hint that newer building materials will really become a source of new design. It was H. G. Wells, I believe, in a book called Anticipations, written at the dawn of the present century, who pointed out the ridiculous way in which mechanical progress is often obstructed by the inertia of men's minds. His most striking illustration was that of the average railroad train. If man's imagination had really caught the full implication of steam power, the average gauge of railroad tracks could have been doubled or trebled, thus insuring easy riding in commodious cars. Instead of this, man with his puny mind simply thought he had discovered a steam horse instead of an old grey mare, so he put a steam horse in front of an old stage coach, put the stage coach on tracks and thus established for years to come the uncomfortable narrow gauge of the present railroad train. Wells says something to the effect that even the finest modern express train has trotting before it the ghost of an old stage horse.

We have had modern illustrations of this same limited mentality in the use of steel to replace wood. The first all-steel railroad cars were carefully painted so as to look like wood. It took many years for the designers to realize that steel itself could be so molded and shaped as to be a thing of beauty in its own right. In like manner the early skyscrapers were simply elongated buildings of the old type. When architects first began to think of lending some beauty to them, the best they could do was to imitate the spires of a cathedral. It has remained for the last few years to develop those monuments with receding terraces which in their very design show the new possibilities of beauty in the new material resources of the building trade. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the play Tomorrow is the readiness with which its authors and its mechanical designers have grasped the changes which new materials and new inventions would logically produce in the human viewpoint and in the use of decorative design.

It is only fair to add, however, that some very good acting has been added to the other interesting features of this play. I am inclined to think that one young actress, Mary Loane, will be heard from quite definitely within the next year or two. And certainly Bruce Evans shows qualities as a juvenile which would make him distinctly valuable to a good casting director. Clyde Fillmore and Jessie Busley carry the leading rôles with grace and good humor. (At the Lyceum Theatre.)

Caprice

THE subscribers of the Theatre Guild can now draw a long breath and settle down with satisfaction. That incomparable pair, Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, have returned from their road tour and are now appearing at the Guild's own theatre in a comedy by Sil-Vara which, aside from certain definite objections, has many sparkling individual scenes.

To dispose at once of the play itself—it is one of those objectionable affairs which makes hilarious comedy of the chivalrous dreams and adolescent idealism of a boy of sixteen. I do not mean for an instant that the author himself laughs at these things. On the contrary, it is quite probably his intention to show up through ironic contrast the utter cynicism of his two leading characters into whose lives this boy comes. Sil-Vara could probably tell you quite sincerely that the laugh is on the older people in his play. Nevertheless, it is one of those affairs which a modern audience takes into its own hands and refuses to accept in any other mood than that of near farce. It is also one of those plays in which the author insists on having his own word to say in the last act and indulges in one of those idiotic speeches, through one of his characters, to the effect that no one can tell what is good or evil and that the only good is being true to oneself, etc., etc., etc. Of course no one will disagree with the fact that the best anyone can do is to live up to his own lights, but the implication is that if one's own lights are rather dim, there is no possible way in which they can be brightened and trimmed up. It would have been much better if Sil-Vara had allowed the irony of the play to speak for itself and had not attempted this fallacious and bromidic comment.

This leaves us free to talk of the acting itself. Perhaps in some distant land there are two people who act more perfectly together than Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne. But I am sure that in my own wanderings I have never seen that couple and I have little hope of ever seeing them. Both in comedy of this type and in more serious or even tragic work, Miss Fontanne does more by implication than any actress I know of. She

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has an infallible sense in the timing of her lines which wrings from them every last drop of pathos, tragedy, cynicism, innuendo or sly humor that they contain. Mr. Lunt does the same thing with the single limitation of his diction, which is still far from perfect. His voice carries better than it used to, and his enunciation is clearer, but his diction as a whole remains the same in nearly every part he undertakes. Miss Fontanne knows how to characterize with her voice, but this particular art Mr. Lunt has still to master. In every other respect he is a true artist, and one of the ablest actors whom we have.

Douglas Montgomery, as the boy, Robert, who comes back to seek acknowledgment by his real father, gives a matchless performance of a very difficult and sensitive rôle. It is certainly not his fault if the audience insists on seeing brutal comedy in Robert's shy and tender dreams. Lily Cahill, as Robert's mother, is also excellent, and the minor parts are all well taken. The play has been directed by Phillip Moeller, and his increasingly fine work gains special distinction in this case from the way in which he has blended the dialogue of all his actors so that they seem to be interrupting and tumbling over each other in the most natural way in the world without interfering for an instant with the sense or clearness of their speeches. It gives the perfect illusion of naturalness in a way that demands the utmost skill on the director's part. (At the Guild Theatre.)

Lady Dedlock

LADY DEDLOCK marks the return of Margaret Anglin to the New York stage in a starring vehicle of her own. The play is a romantic melodrama by Paul Kester, based on Charles Dickens's novel Bleak House. If we understand the advance press notices correctly, Miss Anglin herself has had a large share in the rewriting and rearranging of this play during its road trials. To say that it is not a particularly successful piece of dramatic construction is merely to say that Mr. Kester and Miss Anglin have been as baffled as nearly every other author who has ever attempted to dramatize Dickens.

The author who dramatizes any famous novel faces a problem of divided loyalties. If he is faithful to the book, he is betraying the best interests of the theatre, and if he alters the story ruthlessly he is supposed to be unfaithful to the book. Nor does a compromise help much in a situation of this sort. The theatre is a very jealous master. At all costs a play must create and maintain the illusion of reality for a period of two and a half hours. We do not see a play as we read a book, in daily stages. The play must accomplish its result at one sitting. To my mind, therefore, the dramatist has no real choice but fidelity to the demands of the theatre. If necessary, he must discard everything except the main theme and characters of the book. The rambling, discursive and detailed manner of Dickens's writing makes a faithful dramatization an impossibility from the start. There are only a few moments of real drama in Paul Kester's Lady Dedlock. The rest of the time is taken up with preparatory exposition and in following the weary threads to their conclusion. Miss Anglin, whom I admire tremendously as one of our few real artists, plays the two rôles of Lady Dedlock and her French maid. As a stunt, it is worthy of comment. But as a real vehicle for Miss Anglin's noteworthy gifts, it is far below par. Miss Anglin should appear only in plays, whether comedy or tragedy, which give her an opportunity to create and bring to vivid life a single character of outstanding importance. To put it crudely, she is one of those artists handicapped by the importance of being great. (At the Ambassador Theatre.)

COMMUNICATIONS

TARIFF FOR THE FARMER

Ryegate, Montana.

TO the Editor:—I have read the November 14 issue of The Commonweal with great interest, especially the article on Tariff for the Farmer which was written by Mr. Robert Stewart.

The plan proposed by Mr. Stewart appears entirely feasible and logical. It is more than likely, indeed, that it will be opposed on the grounds that it would increase the price of foodstuffs to the consumer, but this increase would be rather insignificant. Even if there were a noticeable increase in the price of food, it would, after all, be only justice to the producer who, during the past seventy years, has been compelled to pay a high rate for almost everything he had to purchase, because of the tariff.

During the years from 1880 to 1890 the Republicans made tariff for protection of American industries and labor the principal issue, while the Democratic party contended that, while the tariff had been all right for a limited number of years, even during those years—1880 to 1890—the various industries had become so strong that no such high protection was needed.

Many of the people believed at that time that the tariff was unfair, inasmuch as, during those days, though it did protect the manufacturer, it at no time offered any protection to the producer and, at that time, not even to labor. Manufacturers or railroads and coal mines, in fact all of the large and important employers of labor, could import labor from Europe free, and it was a common occurrence for agents to be sent to Europe to make contracts for thousands of laboring men to come to the United States to enter the employ of manufacturers, and more largely of coal mines, at contract labor, to the detriment of the laboring man who had probably been here for years and was not making much more than a bare living, even though his hours of labor were long.

The farmer at that time had to pay a higher price for nearly everything that he had to buy in the way of manufactured goods, including machinery, clothing, etc., while he obtained no benefit from such a system, as the prices he got for wheat and other staple products were at practically all times fixed by the world market.

In this respect many considered the stand of the Republican party rather unfair to the producer as well as to labor; but the more thickly populated eastern states were generally able to control and exercise sufficient influence in Congress to maintain a rather high tariff.

Labor leaders woke up to realize the condition much sooner than the producers did, and they perfected their organizations through unions which, at times, also went to the extreme, but which did bring about an improvement in the existing situation, especially among the more skilled laborers. Labor also kept insisting upon stricter laws regarding immigration, and brought about the abolition of the contract labor system; later, through further agitation, it was probably more instrumental than any other class in bringing about strict immigration laws. Whether the latter laws are in all respects fair is perhaps a debatable question, but there is hardly any doubt that, as a whole, they will be found to be quite generally upheld.

The growers of farm products, however, found it very difficult to organize on account of the vast territory which

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they covered, and their interests were not always identical on account of geographical location, etc. The result has been that, after the world war, the producer probably found himself in a worse condition than any other class, and no speedy remedy could be brought about.

While tariff for revenue was the original motive for the enactment of the tariff laws which were adhered to quite generally for a long time, conditions after the Civil War made it possible to make the feeling still stronger. Industry was starting up and kept urging upon Congress that it needed to be encouraged by a tariff against cheap labor of Europe, although at the same time, there was nothing to prevent them from obtaining all the cheap labor they needed, and they succeeded for a number of years in obtaining the support of labor as well as of the farmer, for a high protective tariff, with the cry that it helped "infant industry," gave employment to labor and created a home market for the farmer's products. All of this was partly true, but, while originally the object of the tariff was to produce revenue so as to assist in obtaining funds to pay the indebtedness of the government incurred through the Civil War, the real effect was almost the opposite as, gradually, the tariff was raised so high that it almost made imports prohibitive, and therefore the income to the government from the measure was insignificant. But it certainly did build up industry—as many believe, at the expense of the producer, and even during a number of years, at the expense of labor, until the latter class through organization improved its condition, as I have already said.

The unfavorable effect which it gradually had on agriculture was not very noticeable, partly for the reason that, during the years from 1860 to even as late as 1905, there were vast tracts of free government land, and many laborers who did not like the environment of the coal mines or factories quit their jobs and went west to take up homestead land on which they could always make a fair living. It presented a better condition to establish a home than the city or mining district did. The farmer prospered in a way, inasmuch as he saw his land increase in value because of the fact that more people came who wanted land; but it seems to have been quite generally overlooked that, although land values increased, the situation really did not show very much greater results of his labor inasmuch as the increase in the value of his land did not really make him richer unless he sold out and was able to retire on what he received.

It gradually increased his taxes, which was but natural, inasmuch as improvements of a public nature were necessary, and all made life more agreeable for the producer, as well as for all others.

The tendency, however, always existed, beginning about 1881, to borrow money for the purpose of buying more land, or of making improvements which the former was unable to make from the profits of farming but which he felt he should have and was entitled to, and that is when the troubles of agriculture started. Very few were ever able to pay a mortgage once placed on the farm, and, periodically, as land values increased, the amount of the mortgage also increased. There was, however, no difficulty in obtaining loans on farms, inasmuch as the demand for land continued, and there was, apparently, general prosperity, which, immediately after the close of the war, reached its climax (as during the years 1918 and 1919 prices of agricultural products rose to such a high figure that every farmer seemed to think he could afford to go still more into debt and buy himself rich either in land or in live stock). Everything went well until the farmer was asked to liquidate and, finding it impossible to liquidate from the products he had raised and from proceeds of cattle on hand, he was forced to sell, which brought prices of all kinds of produce, live stock and land down; so that even the amount of the debt could not be paid by the proceeds of sale under conditions existing then. While we have recovered to a great extent from those years, still it must be remembered that many farmers were absolutely unable to meet their obligations, and were forced into bankruptcy. It must, however, also be remembered that, as a general rule, the farmers in the Northwest, even though perhaps deprived of their home, really did not lose so much themselves as the persons did who had loaned them the money, because the farmer did not usually have very much invested outside of his time and labor.

The fact is that the borrower as well as the person who loaned the money made a mistake. The borrower seemed to forget that the debt would ever have to be paid, and the money lender seemed to think that the time would never come when he would have to ask for payment.

The conditions as brought about during all those years, however, I believe do show that probably one class benefited by the tariff quite materially at the expense of the producer, and, during the years from 1870 to 1890, also at the expense of labor. Industry became aware soon after the first tariff laws after the Civil War were enacted that, while these were ostensibly imposed for the purpose of raising revenue, by gradually boosting them to a point where the revenue to the government became insignificant but where the benefit to industry was more and more noticeable, it was able to keep them up through propaganda. This practice built up industry which, while desirable in a general way, was probably not quite sound, inasmuch as the producer was hardly proportionately prosperous, even though he perhaps thought that he was, inasmuch as many considered themselves well-to-do because they owned considerable land. But they forgot that this did not mean wealth unless they had it clear of debt; indeed, even after it was clear, it became almost a burden on account of taxation, etc.

I hope that the plan presented by Mr. Stewart will be widely discussed and considered.

HENRY THIEN.

IS PROTESTANTISM DYING?

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor:—I venture to disagree with the conclusions reached in your editorial, Is Protestantism Dying? It is, of course, hardly more than a case of one man's powers of observation and intuition against another's; but I suspect that your writer was never (as I once was) a Protestant. Therefore, it seems to me, he fails to understand many aspects of this question.

The success of certain bigots in the South and elsewhere in preventing the election of Governor Smith on the ground of his religion cannot be taken as a sign of the strength of Protestantism; rather it is a sign of weakness. Fanaticism is not merely the having too much of that good thing, conviction, any more than superstition is an excess of faith. The religious man is free of superstition in precise proportion to his degree of understanding of his faith; the man of firm conviction is tolerant, because he is sure that the truth will ultimately be seen as its own witness. The fanatic and bigot are really men in a panic. The bolt recently shot with such a bang by the Cannon will prove to be a boomerang. And this demonstration of Protestantism, which is really due to a sense of its

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own weakness in everything except numbers, will, I prophesy, bring a powerful reaction.

I am far from denying that genuine religion is still often to be found among Protestants. But the general test is simple enough: the religious books and the sermons of the Protestant leaders have every succeeding year less to do with doctrine. If it is difficult to gauge this as between two consecutive years, go back twenty years and note the difference; then go back twenty more, and so on. You would be surprised. I do not doubt that there would be some improvement (in manners or tone) to commend—though only this age is capable of the abysmal vulgarity of Mr. Bruce Barton on sacred themes. But in spite of a general improvement discoverable in style, religion as such is being pushed off the sidewalk by a false system of ethics.

Where you do still get a vivid belief in the traditional Christian doctrines among Protestants, you are, after all, getting nothing but Catholicism—though it may be held in an attenuated form. The movement of revolt against Christian unity started with the pitting of certain articles of the Faith—to which a disproportionate importance was given—against the creed as a whole, and the consequence was that early Protestantism showed itself as definitely theological as Catholicism. Its theology—Catholic theology misapplied—kept it going. It was using the acquired momentum of the Catholic faith. That momentum is, in my judgment, nearing absolute exhaustion. As a system or organization Protestantism may well continue to exist for many years to come: as a vital spiritual force it is already on its deathbed.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

SETTING ONE'S HOUSE IN ORDER

San Antonio, Texas.

TO the Editor:—The article by Mr. Thomas J. Malone, Setting One's House in Order, that appeared in The Commonweal of December 12, is certainly deserving of serious consideration. It is particularly apropos at this season of the year when the balancing of accounts and matters of inventory are of current moment. Unfortunately, however, the theme is one that does not readily lend itself to an accurate, detailed discussion in the pages of any periodical whose circulation, like that of The Commonweal, is national in its scope. Both the constitution and the statutory laws of the various states differ so widely, even in so-called fundamentals, as to the vesting of title to property upon the death of the owner, that legal information of a general nature upon this subject may easily become misleading to the average layman. The lawyer whom the author interviewed evidently sensed this danger when he remarked "a man does well to seek legal advice on his particular estate problem."

Without discussing at length the various problems of property rights which the author of the article attempts to solve, and which he most probably does solve, insofar as they apply to residents of states that have not abrogated certain common law rules, I will review his summary, which embodies what he considers the three most important suggestions, namely: (1) Joint ownership of bank account, with complete ownership in the survivor; (2) Joint tenancy of homestead vesting title in the survivor; (3) Designation of personal beneficiary in life insurance policies.

If, for example, a resident of the state of Texas were to attempt to follow these suggestions he would find under the laws of this state that, while he could safely pursue suggestion number three, numbers one and two, however, would soon lead his heirs into difficulty, in the absence of a will. This difficulty is occasioned, in the first instance, because of the system of community property laws that exists in Texas; and in the second instance, because the common law doctrine as to an estate in entirety in the survivor, or cotenant, has long ago been abrogated by statute in this state. Further, this situation is not alone applicable to the state of Texas. There are several other states that have adopted the community property system, and a number have done away with the common law rule of survivorship. As to suggestion number three, the naming of the personal beneficiary of the insurance policy, I consider this a most commendable one—one that, I believe, can be safely put into practice in almost every state in the union.

Now, concretely and for the benefit of the layman, permit me to describe briefly the situation in which the widow of the author's "average man" would find herself were she a resident of the state of Texas (or of any of the other states having similar laws) and her husband were to die intestate (that is, leaving no will). Immediately upon the death of the husband and the father, the widow and the children would become the owners of the deceased's share of the property accumulated during the time of the marital state, in certain proportions as provided by law. The children being minors, the property could not be disposed of or encumbered without the appointment of a legal guardian for them, which in turn would entail the giving of bond, court costs and attorney's fees. Even the taking out of so-called "community letters" has its distressing complications.

In the event that there were no children, matters would be further complicated as to the separate property of the deceased, that is, property owned by him before marriage and still owned by him at the time of his death. In the absence of a will, the father and mother of the deceased would inherit certain portions of his property. And it may be well to mention at this point that a similar rule would apply in the event the death of the wife preceded that of the husband.

If the husband and the wife would each execute a simple will leaving all property to the survivor, appointing the survivor as executor to act independently of the probate court and without bond, the situation above referred to would unquestionably be avoided. However, as indicated above, different rules governing the situation may obtain in the various states of the union.

In conclusion, I would add that the author's statement "that about 60 percent of the wills drawn by lawyers are faulty and so open to attack" is certainly a figure taken at random and has, in my opinion, no basis in fact. In the comparatively small percentage of will cases where there is a contest it is true that faulty wills occasionally make their appearance. But, as compared with these few (some of which, at that, are the creatures of "eccentrics" who have made their own legal diagnosis before reaching a lawyer's office, and who then insist upon the lawyer's preparing a will according to their own pet version) thousands of wills are probated annually without contest, disposing of estates both large and small with a minimum of expense to the devisees or to the heirs of the deceased.

EDWARD H. LANGE.

(The Commonweal invites its readers to send in communications expressing individual views on all topics that are of public interest, regardless of whether or not such topics have been previously discussed in its columns.—The Editors.)

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BOOKS

Two Russian Leaders

Fateful Years: The Reminiscences of Serge Sazonoff, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1914. New York: Frederick Stokes Company. $5.00.

Heading for the Abyss: Reminiscences by Prince Lichnowsky. New York: Payson and Clarke, Limited. $7.50.

MR. SAZONOFF always was a mediocre man. At the time he was appointed Minister for Foreign affairs, public opinion did not credit him with sufficient energy or intelligence to handle the difficult matters he was about to confront. The Balkan question was then rising once more to the surface, and a very witty but extremely cruel man said that Mr. Sazonoff would probably always live in fear of the east wind, because it might blow away his frail person. This judgment was a mistaken one, because if we are to judge of Mr. Sazonoff by what he tells us in his book, he was so far from dreading the east wind that he did all that lay within his power to transform it into a hurricane. Until this too long, seldom interesting, but certainly instructive volume saw the light of the day, the general public had not suspected that under his direction Russia was striving to realize the famous "testament" of Peter the Great (which had never existed) and slowly working toward the conquest or annexation of Constantinople and the Straits.

Sazonoff, at all events, had this policy in mind. The most evident thing in his book is the fact (which no one suspected before, or even during, the war) that his entire policy was to make out of Russia the dominant power in the Balkan Peninsula, and to replace with Russian gendarmes the soldiers of the Turkish sultan in Constantinople. Unfortunately for his country, he believed himself to be a great minister, a sort of Russian Bismarck, who was destined by Providence to place the diadem of Justinian on the head of another mediocre individual, Nicholas II. The two men understood each other. They both had great ideas and they never realized the difficulty of applying them. One can only admire the guilelessness of Mr. Sazonoff when he relates that the emperor, after he had told him he had secured, or was trying to secure, the possession of the Straits for Russia as a sequel to the war, said to him, "I owe you the happiest day in my life." The minister who repeats to us this incident does not seem to appreciate at all the enormity of it, nor the fact that a policy such as he was attempting could be carried through only by a powerful nation with a powerful army at its command. Yet he knew very well that Russia, exhausted by two unhappy wars, was no longer powerful in the sense of being an important factor in international politics, and that its army had practically been annihilated. He knew it, and he makes no secret of the fact, and quite unnecessarily repeats to us the words of Mr. Stolypin: "For the success of the Russian Resolution war is essential, without war the Revolutionists can do nothing." Yet not only did he not try to avoid a war, but he helped to bring it on.

No doubt can remain as to this point after one has read his book. Mr. Sazonoff succeeded in pushing through a Slavophile policy which none among his predecessors at the Foreign Office had followed, at least with the persistence which he displayed. His book only upholds the German theory that it was Russia which was responsible for the outbreak of the war. It also justifies the criticisms of those who from the first declared he was but the tool of the clever French ambassador in St. Petersburg, M. Paléologue. It justifies everything, in fact, that has been advanced by his enemies in regard to the part he had played in the catastrophe. Without realizing it, and in the innocence of his soul, he did nothing but harm to his country.

In contrast to its tactless frankness stands another volume of memoirs, the reminiscences of Prince Lichnowsky. These constitute a work of priceless value to all the students of the causes that brought about the world war, and they are also a record of honesty, straightforwardness and gentlemanliness which cannot be sufficiently praised. Prince Lichnowsky's part in the tragedy which began during that fateful month of August of the year 1914 may well be looked back upon with pride by his sons. He did what he could to avert the catastrophe about which he never had any illusions, and he did it in an intelligent manner, a manner worthy of the grand seigneur he was, and had always been. He did not shirk responsibilities, and he accepted with courage those his country had assumed with such a light heart, making no attempt to mitigate or excuse them. Prince Lichnowsky was certainly not a mediocre man, although he may have lacked brilliancy at times. He could foresee events, and he was enough of a patriot to warn those who directed the politics of Germany of the depth of the abyss into which he saw them falling together with his fatherland. All the despatches which he wrote when in London testify to the fact. If he had been listened to, very probably the entire tragedy of the war might have been avoided. He was an exception among his compatriots who, as a rule, are always impervious to the arguments of their opponents, and above everything else he was a man of duty.

His book will always rank among the most important publications dealing with the war. It is sincere, truthful, well written and exceedingly clear. It tells us exactly how things happened, and clearly expresses the opinions and convictions of the author, while the melancholy regret displayed in some passages leaves one with the conviction that after all there are always to be found honest men in the world, not afraid of telling the truth no matter how unpalatable it may prove to be. Prince Lichnowsky may have made mistakes, such for instance as his opinion that Russian policy as represented by Mr. Sazonoff was a peaceful one, but—and this must be told to his honor—he was seldom mistaken in his appreciations of the events in which he found himself so often an unwilling actor.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

Shadows Moving in Chaos

Yet Do Not Grieve, by Conal O'Riordan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

LIKE a big ship indifferent to the put-putting of fussy motor boats, comes this leisurely historical novel in a day when the fashion is brevity and speed and clipped conciseness. The tale of David Tyrconnell Quinn's few years could be told in much less than these 553 close-printed pages; but what Conal O'Riordan is really about is the picturing of an era. His characters, live flesh and blood as they are with two unhappy exceptions, are nevertheless puppets, dancing to strings the other ends of which are lost in the chaos where diplomats and dynasties, military chieftains and money lords, feudal remnants and democratic insurgencies, struggle in aloof contempt of human suffering. It is perhaps the final touch of consistent art that makes the chief character in the story, the hero if you please, the most compliant of all these puppets; but it does detract from the full measure of possible interest to

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have a hero who permits himself at every point to be pushed around by others—a hero whom you want to pinch, prod, kick into some sort of self-assertion. Charming and noble David may be, but much of a fool he surely is. The reader knows it is entirely his own fault that in the end he must turn to the pale comfort of those lines of Keats from which the title is taken, instead of to the arms of Ruth or of the Princess Charlotte. It is an additional weakness of the tale that the first of these two heroines is a mere bloodless wraith.

But it is full tribute to Mr. O'Riordan's powers to say that not only does he evoke a dead era with singular immediacy, but he makes the interplay of the forces of chaos as interesting as are the deeds of individual heroes and heroines in novels of narrower scope. The world in which David Quinn moved so futilely was a world in which immemorial things were disintegrating and strange new things were taking form. Facets of this chaos are turned to us in sharp sidelights.

One of David's grandfathers is an old Irish Catholic chieftain, maintaining with his pious wife the old feudal dignity deep in the inner halls of his partly ruined castle, though when he goes abroad he must dress like one of the peasants with whom he kneels at the secret sacrifice of the Mass. David's other grandfather is one of those English bankers and industrial potentates who were just getting their grip on the throat of the nation; grasping, scheming, pushing, cloaking deeds which do not stop short of murder, in the garb of piety. David's father also murders, but on the so-called "field of honor." In this swashbuckler is concentrated the tragedy of the younger Irish nobility of the period—torn from the ancestral acres, torn from the old piety, assertively Catholic in name while pagan in practice; thrust into the British uniform, cherishing a blind love of Ireland while accepting a baronetcy to betray the country into the Union.

Almost without exception the chief characters in this tale of a crazy epoch, Irish and English alike, more than half sympathize with Bonaparte, yet one after another, one generation after another, they permit themselves to be hurled into the conflict by the Hanoverian dynasty which they all despise. The high point of Mr. O'Riordan's art is in those scenes in which he takes us (presumably with the guidance of sound research) into the very purlieus of the putrescent Regency court. The chapters devoted to the battle of Waterloo are grimly successful in their delineation of horrors, but curiously slow-paced and without stirring power. Nevertheless, despite an exasperating hero and a shadow-heroine, and despite a sometimes ridiculous resort to coincidence to carry the plot, this is one of the most considerable novels of the season, not unworthy of comparison with Henry Esmond and The Virginians, and likely to have a long life.

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL.

Political Half-Tones

Masks in a Pageant, by William Allen White. New York: The Macmillan Company. $5.00.

THE recent elections brought out a diverse army of books, few of which were destined to survive the particular exigency for which they were written. Some among these may have a happier fate; one is William Allen White's Masks in a Pageant. For Mr. White's series of biographical articles on our Presidents from Benjamin Harrison to Calvin Coolidge furnishes one view of the events that have occurred on the American stage of politics for the past three decades.

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ous style, the book provides smooth reading even when the realization that the events are recorded from a particularly partizan slant, is most apparent. This realization comes through no fault of the author's, although he is at some pains to explain in his preface that his personal friendship for Theodore Roosevelt may unconsciously color his appraisal of the Rooseveltian character and administration. Yet in no other section of his book does Mr. White show any doubt of his own infallibility of judgment of men and events. It is this very dogmatic attitude which reminds readers again and again that he is expressing his own opinion and not anything that even approximately approaches a consensus of opinion. Were the bulk of the most sweeping assertions in the book submitted to political writers, there would arise a bewildering plethora of objections, distinctions, denials and approbations. Surely no one today would attempt to lay down an ultimate determination of the qualities and characteristics which went toward the making of Woodrow Wilson.

For the greater part, the volume boasts a coherence which is not often found in this type of assembled essays, collected because the times offer the greatest advantage for publication. Croker and Platt, New York bosses, lend their verbal portraits to explain much of the background against which Benjamin Harrison, Grover Cleveland and William McKinley moved. The "two Warwicks," Mark Hanna and William Jennings Bryan, properly take their places to delineate the course of American elections. But when the book is concluded with a division under the title, The Young Princes of Democracy, the plan of the work is destroyed and the intelligence of the reader insulted by the inclusion of a sketch of William Hale Thompson. This inclusion is much more deplorable because the only other sharer of such a classification is Alfred Emanuel Smith. Mr. White might, at least, have set himself down at his editorial desk, sent to his morgue for clippings on Herbert Hoover, and concocted a possible conclusion to his volume with the Republican standard-bearer, who has since been chosen to lead the country, as its subject. Is one to believe that the nation is so poor in leaders that Thompson must be thrown in?

In the following passage Mr. White display the essence of his faults and virtues in the writing of Masks in a Pageant: "Each of these queer Dicks whom we have called to the White House from odd corners in our national life has been, in the day of his power and glory, exactly the kind of man whom democracy, if it had known its conscious mind, which it probably did not, would, or should, have chosen to represent the spirit of the hour in which he came. Any other President, functioning in the place of either of his predecessors or successors, would have made a mess of it. For each was the embodiment of a definite, even if a passing faith in the heart of the American people when he came into power." It might be in order to inquire how Mr. White, or anyone else, can be sure that any man other than he who was elected would have made a mess of it. That Providence has been so solicitous of the American people that no matter whom they chose, however accidentally or premeditatedly, the selection of chief magistrate was inevitably wise, is a belief incongruous with the flippant cynicism of Mr. White's general postulations. And the tragedy of the entire book from the author's standpoint is that his credibility has been irretrievably damaged by his denouncing of Alfred E. Smith, his retraction of his denouncing, and his retraction of his retraction, coupled with his contradictory statements on the Republican candidates.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI.

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Conjugal Alternatives

The Marriage Crisis, by Ernest R. Groves. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $2.00.

The Family Life Today, edited by Margaret E. Rich. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

THESE two works, one an exposition by the professor of sociology at Boston University, and the other a series of papers by various writers which were read at a conference in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of family social work in America at Buffalo a year ago, are marked generally by a sane, conservative treatment of their important subject, and hence should be of interest to all students of the social sciences. Assuming that there is a crisis in the minds of many concerning marriage, Professor Groves finds the causes in the prevalent pleasure philosophy of life, which tests everything by its one principle, together with the supposed absolute dependability of present contraceptive methods of birth control and the consequent freeing of the parties concerned from any social obligation which would arise were such certain methods not available.

Under such circumstances marriage would apparently become a purely private matter and of no concern to any social groups. Thus experimental marriages of the trial or companionate variety and divorce by mutual consent usher in a new freedom and a corresponding happiness. Our social institutions must not lag behind the new science, which opens up such wondrous vistas. Even promiscuity may become respectable. Aside from the denial of the fact that any such unfailing contraceptive devices exist, Dr. Groves insists that society must recognize that the permanent and happy union with offspring is the normal situation upon which all other predication must rest. Even that other small class now so vociferously insisting upon its right to experiment must, if it is sincere, see that it is really defeating its avowed purpose by clouding the very entrance into marriage with doubt when the highest faith and confidence are absolutely necessary for even moderate success.

Indeed, the whole experimental attitude, by the closest reasoning, must be seen ultimately to resolve itself into a defeat of the great goal of the marriage relation in all civilized society, namely, the marriage for affection. Even if the Catholic reader may take exception to occasional obiter dicta, or even the whole naturalistic level upon which the argument is developed, he will, nevertheless, be interested in the sound rational conclusion which Dr. Groves feels compelled to draw from his premises. If the way out lies not in experimental marriage, then we may find it by such natural methods as more definite education for family life, in a more wholesome, sane attitude toward sex, more sensible marital freedom, development of methods of painless childbirth, better housing, greater family security through insurance and a reform of the present legal procedure in divorce, with its criminal atmosphere, by making it a fact-finding, social-adjusting institution.

We are particularly interested in the first one of these alternatives. While we are under no illusion as to any magic power in education, it does seem that our Catholic colleges seldom, if ever, find any place in the curriculum, or out of it, for a frank consideration of what, in nine cases out of ten, stands just beyond the collegian's present experience. It is all very well to talk of sacramental grace of matrimony, but helping ourselves also may we not, by taking deliberate, formal thought, perhaps reduce the number of marriage wrecks?

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The Church, too, could make more of the opportunity for formal instruction by doing something beyond the publication of the banns or securing the necessary dispensations. This is a serious responsibility, as the increasing number of divorces among Catholics bears evident witness.

If there is a single influence working for good or ill in the family life of today, which has been overlooked in the fourteen papers of the Family Social Work Conference which make up The Family Life Today, we could not name that force. And, after all, "the welfare of the family," as the editor says, "may well be a touchstone for evaluating the lasting worth of present-day industrial, educational, religious and other social institutions." This is what the writers, each a specialist in his field, have done in a most sensible, interesting and constructive manner. Professor Groves has here an opportunity for developing at greater length his insistence on education for family life. All of the writers agree in their faith in the value and fundamental soundness of the present family life despite the numerous difficulties with which it is beset in modern ways of living, and each brings, with an authority born of a long practical experience, valuable concrete proposals for "the saving health of the family"—proposals which certainly no student of society can afford to neglect.

CHARLES A. HART.

Who Is the Jew?

Sur les Ruines du Temple, by Joseph Bonsirven. Paris: Bernard Grasset. 15 francs.

SINGULARLY few good books have been written by Christian scholars on the subject of Jewish life and tradition, with the result that the intimate relationship between Hebraic and Christian truth, so constantly before the minds of the Fathers, has frequently been lost sight of in modern religious thinking. Father Bonsirven, well known for his contributions to many scholarly journals, has now written a book which, though it does not aim at exhaustive discussion of the vast theme, is nevertheless more than a mere introduction. It compares with the writings of Professor Moore in much the same way as a manual by Saintsbury compares with the Cambridge *History of English Literature*.

A very comprehensive introduction outlines the history of Judaism and offers a survey of the literature. Two following chapters present the monotheistic nucleus of the Hebraic faith, together with the conclusions which the "chosen people" have drawn from it. Less familiar to outsiders is the Torah, or the "teaching," in accordance with which the devout Jew lives; and I believe that Father Bonsirven's comment is notable for avoidance of extremes and for the quality of "Einfühlung" so indispensable in matters of this character. Equally good are the chapters on Jewish cult and moral principle, an idea of which is supplied by the section which, translated into English, appears elsewhere in this issue of The Commonweal. Virtues which have triumphed over ghetto and migratory conditions deserve the admiration of all. Unfortunately these have influenced Europe less than has the strange Cabala, regarding which our author says only what is essential. His conclusions are interesting and sensible, although not everyone will, of course, be ready to agree with them.

The author's position as professor in the Ecole française de Théologie at Enghien guarantees the usefulness of this book to Catholic readers, to whom it offers a fund of valuable information. But I believe that it will also meet with the approval of earnest representative Jews, so just and well-

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What One Issue of The Commonweal Evoked

F. P. A., Dean of Columnists, In The Conning Tower, of The New York World

Of the weeklies of opinion and violent conviction, our favorite is the Commonweal. That is not an utterly fair comparison, for our preference is not based upon the editorials of the weeklies, because we infrequently read editorials nowadays.

It is for the special articles, mostly of a critical nature, that we like the Commonweal. It is a Catholic journal, and probably it reflects the Catholic point of view. But what that is we haven't been able to determine with expressible accuracy. The verse that the Commonweal runs strikes us as the best verse printed by any American publication. To us it seems non-sectarian. Its dramatic reviews seem excellent and untinged with what is often called the Catholic idea, which is supposed to see propaganda in stones, sermons in the running brooks, and proselytizing in everything.

In the January 2nd number of the Commonweal there is "The Case of Channie Tripp," by John J. Callahan, jr. Channie Tripp, thirty-seven, of Flint, Mich., has been sentenced to the Marquette prison for life. He was convicted, for the fourth time, of having liquor in his possession. Prohibition in the United States being what it is, it seems to us that this sentence is absurd and disgraceful, mandatory though it was. For Michigan, which has no capital punishment, has the Habitual Criminal clause, which is something like the Baumes law. Why has not more fuss been raised about Channie Tripp? It may be advanced that the Commonweal is an anti-Prohibition paper; but even a dry paper, it seems to us, might see that there are thousands and thousands of persons in New York City alone who have liquor in their possession just as illegally as Channie Tripp did.

From The Washington Correspondent of The Berliner Tageblatt

Your issue of January 2nd appears to me as an outstanding editorial achievement. From the first page to the last, this number is filled with items of intense interest to, no doubt, all of your readers. But I want to single out particularly the editorials "Old Heidelberg" and "What Shall the Catholic Do?" and Dr. Fulton J. Sheen's stirring and very impressive contribution "Is Religion Growing Up?"

To any person who, by profession or inclination or both, has to follow current events it must appear time over time that it is almost impossible to keep track intelligently of the continuous flow of periodical publications. But I think that The Commonweal has succeeded to reach a position of such conspicuousness, because of the general, quite extraordinary intellectual impulse it conveys and the amazing comprehensiveness of the editorial surveys of contemporary problems, that no picture obtained from the periodical press of America, no matter of what reference, is anyways complete that does not include The Commonweal.

I am happy to be one of those who could follow your ascent to such high merits from the very start, and I want to congratulate you most sincerely at the threshold of this new year on your magnificent and untiring contribution to a better understanding of the Catholic viewpoint in the United States.

I enclose my check for $1 for which, please, have mailed to me a corresponding number (charging the mailing expense) of copies of your January 2nd issue which I want to distribute enthusiastically among some friends.

Your grateful subscriber,
DR. MAX JORDAN.

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informed are its pages. Surely nothing better can be said for a work religious in character, particularly in an age when so many volumes of apologetic or exposition seem designed to alienate everyone excepting their authors. Let me add that the book belongs to the unusually fine series, Collection La Vie Chrétienne, which, under the surveillance of Maurice Brillant, is building up an exceptionally serviceable library of scholarly Catholic books.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

Before All Men

A Catholic Looks at Life, by James J. Walsh. Boston: The Stratford Company.

A NEW book by Dr. Walsh is always welcome. He either turns the light on new material, or refurbishes old facts in new brilliancy. In this work the everyday Catholic may find some new intellectual interests that will serve him in offering an apologia for the faith that he possesses.

We have just passed through a season of anti-Catholic propaganda, mainly carried on by book and pamphlet. If Catholics are to offset these foul endeavors to bolster up inherent prejudices of our non-Catholis fellow-citizens, they must use similar methods. A wide distribution of books such as Dr. Walsh has written would do much to call to the attention of non-Catholics arguments in favor of the Church.

This book is a pocket encyclopedia of Catholic action in many fields of labor. His chapters reproduce for us the cultural and social activities of Catholics in different ages of the world's history and help to enhance the value of Catholic prestige.

Those who assume that Catholicity is played out, and can offer no pabulum to thinking minds, should read the chapters on A Catholic Looks at His Brothers and Sisters in the Faith to find that the golden age of the Church is not in the past; that she can still inspire her children to adapt themselves to modern conditions and yet remain splendidly faithful to their beliefs.

The author introduces us to many children of the Faith who have distinguished themselves in science, art, education and social action. He follows the advice of Michael Williams to get Catholic facts before the people. His conclusion is that the better Catholics and their works are known, the less will prejudice affect non-Catholic circles.

The book is well indexed, but lacks the bibliography and footnotes so essential to a work of this kind.

JOHN J. DONLAN.

CONTRIBUTORS

CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON, a veteran political correspondent for New York journals, is the author of The New Voter; and Party Leaders of the Time.

ARRIGO LEVASTI, a resident of Florence, Italy, is an Italian critical writer and the author of I Mystici.

REV. JOSEPH BONSIRVEN, S.J., is professor of biblical theology and Hebrew at Maison Saint Augustin, Enghien, Belgium, and an authority on Judaism.

DR. JAMES J. WALSH, writer and lecturer, is the author of The Thirteenth, the Greatest of Centuries; The Popes and Science; and other books.

ROBERT HAVEN SCHAUFFLER is a New York poet and the author of The White Comrade and other books.

AMANDA BENJAMIN HALL, a novelist and poet, is author of The Little Red House in the Hollow; Blind Wisdom; and other books.

PRINCESS CATHERINE RADZIWILL of Russia is the author in English of They Knew the Washingtons; The Intimate Life of the Last Tzarina; and several other books of history and reminiscences.

SHAEMAS O'SHEEL is the author of The Blossomy Bough; The Light Feet of Goats; and editor of the new edition of Dreams and Images, Joyce Kilmer's anthology.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI is a member of The Commonweal staff.

REV. CHARLES A. HART is professor of philosophy in the Catholic University of America.

REV. JOHN J. DONLAN is pastor of Saint Paul's Church, Brooklyn, and an official of the Catholic Summer School at Cliff Haven.

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